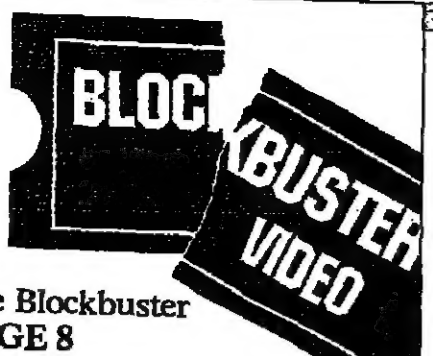


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Shadow minister says Prince of Wales is not fit to be King



Davies: attacked Prince

By NICHOLAS WOOD
CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT
AND JAMES LANDALE

RONALD DAVIES, the Shadow Welsh Secretary, was at the centre of a political storm last night after claiming that the Prince of Wales was unfit to be king.

In a BBC television programme, Mr Davies, MP for Caerphilly, said that the breakdown of the Prince's marriage and his hypocrisy over wildlife disqualified him from succeeding to the throne.

He accused the Prince of "talking to vegetables" while encouraging

his young sons to "kill animals for fun". He also alluded to the Prince's impending divorce and his admitted adultery with Camilla Parker-Bowles by saying that the future of the monarchy could not be separated from the personal qualities of its heirs.

Mr Davies, who accompanied Tony Blair on a St David's day tour of principality yesterday, rushed out a hasty if fulsome apology after his outburst sent tremors through the Labour leaders' office. His views were a blow to Mr Blair's new Labour crusade in which he has sought to repudiate much of radical

heritage, including fringe causes such as republicanism, and to present his party as in tune with mainstream middle-class attitudes.

The interview was recorded for BBC Wales *Welsh Lobby* several days ago, but only transmitted last night. Mr Blair became aware of Mr Davies's outspoken remarks last night.

In the interview, which became even more controversial after the Princess of Wales's decision on Wednesday to agree to a divorce, Mr Davies said: "You can't divorce from the continuation of the monarchy the individuals who are likely to

succeed to the monarchy. You must focus, for example, on Prince Charles and you must ask yourself the question, is this person the fit sort of person to continue the tradition of monarchy, and come to the conclusion: no he isn't."

As news of Mr Davies's remarks swept through Westminster, provoking a contemptuous response from Tory MPs and demands for his immediate dismissal from the Shadow Cabinet, the hapless frontbencher issued a detailed apology.

He said: "In an extended TV interview for what was billed by the

BBC as a light-hearted look at the monarchy, and in expressing my disapproval of the Prince of Wales's support for blood sports, I made a number of remarks which could be taken as a comment on his personal morality, and his fitness to be king. In view of Labour's support for the monarchy, and the offence these comments could cause, I withdraw them and apologise."

"I should add that in the rest of the interview, I stressed respect for the Royal Family, and the admiration that exists for the Queen and the Queen Mother in particular."

"I should further add that the

interview was conducted before the announcement that the Princess of Wales had agreed to a divorce.

"My comments on the effect of the monarchy of the troubles faced by the Prince and Princess of Wales were nonetheless wrong and I will be writing to Prince Charles to apologise."

The Prince left last night for a skiing holiday in the Swiss resort of Klosters after a day of public engagements in Wales on St David's day.

Royal kiss and tell, page 7
Diary, page 22

US links visa for Adams to ceasefire call

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, PHILIP WEBSTER IN BANGKOK, AND NICHOLAS WATT

THE Clinton Administration last night granted Gerry Adams a visa to enter Washington but immediately put pressure on the Sinn Féin leader by insisting he would not be attending any meetings at the White House unless the IRA declared a ceasefire.

Mr Adams will be allowed to visit the US for St Patrick's Day celebrations on March 17, despite Unionist calls for him to be barred, but he will face tighter restrictions than when he was able to raise funds for Sinn Féin during a visit to Washington last year.

Senior US officials said last night that Mr Adams would be prevented from raising funds and would not meet either President Clinton or Vice-President Al Gore. The restrictions were said by Washington officials to reflect the President's irritation that Sinn Féin had failed to respond to calls to reinstate its ceasefire.

The decision to grant Mr Adams a visa came as John Major and John Bruton joined forces to restate their demand for an imminent cessation of violence — following what British officials agreed was a "difference of emphasis" in the way the two had reacted to the IRA's refusal on Thursday

night to announce an immediate end to violence.

However, the Prime Minister came under attack from Mr Adams in the wake of his condemnation of an IRA statement as a "sick joke". Mr Adams accused Mr Major of making a "knee-jerk" response to an IRA statement that accused Britain of placing preconditions in the way of all-party talks. The Sinn Féin president said that republicans would need reassurance and clarification of the Anglo-Irish communiqué in order to rebuild the peace process.

Mr Major stood by his comments, made in Bangkok on Thursday, in which he described as "pathetic" an earlier IRA statement calling for greater clarification.

Although Mr Bruton backed Mr Major in challenging Sinn Féin to ask the IRA to declare a new ceasefire, the two leaders appeared at odds over the force of the reaction. Mr Bruton, who is with Mr Major in Thailand, was reported yesterday to be surprised by the ferocity of Mr Major's attack.

Irish sources denied any rift between the two, but it was said, pointedly, that Mr Major had made his statement while not in possession of all the

facts. "He had assumed that this was the IRA's final word. That appears not to be the case," a senior official said. It was added that "judgments are difficult at 5,000 miles".

Mr Major faced criticism at home when it was claimed that he used the prospect of a breakthrough in the Northern Ireland peace process to help win this week's Commons vote on the Scott report on the sale of arms to Iraq. John Marshall, the Tory MP for Hendon South, claimed yesterday that John Major told him that his refusal to support the Government would jeopardise the Northern Ireland peace process. He said that the Prime Minister had made clear that Ulster Unionists were "holding a pistol to his head", adding that defeat for the Government last Monday would delay plans to bring about all-party talks.

Mr Marshall's account provoked angry accusations from Labour that the Prime Minister had used the prospect of a date for all-party talks to help to avert a damaging Commons defeat.

Mr Marshall met Mr Major twice in the three hours before the vote, which the Government won by a majority of



Tracey Dyer and Jordan: "I had absolutely no idea what happened," she said

Mother who gave birth in coma recovers

By KATE ALDERSON

A WOMAN who was in a coma for ten days after suffering a rare life-threatening condition awoke to be told she had given birth to a healthy boy.

Tracey Dyer, 30, lost consciousness soon after going into labour with her second child, Jordan. She was affected by amniotic fluid embolism, in which fluid surrounding an unborn baby enters the mother's lungs, causing breathing problems and blood clotting. The condition affects about one woman in 60,000, and kills 80 per cent of sufferers.

"When they told me I had given birth to Jordan I just couldn't believe it. I had absolutely no idea what had happened," Mrs Dyer said. "I cried when I held Jordan in my arms for the first time. He is absolutely gorgeous."

Doctors treating Mrs Dyer, who yesterday returned to her home in Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, described her recovery and successful birth as "nothing short of miraculous". While in labour, Mrs Dyer

began to haemorrhage and was rushed into surgery where she underwent three operations, including a hysterectomy. She was in a critical condition for 72 hours and received 74 pints of blood during transfusions.

Gavin MacNab, a consultant obstetrician at Sunderland General Hospital, despaired that his patient might not pull through: "We used up all our blood supplies at the hospital as it was virtually coming out as quickly as we were putting it in."

Mrs Dyer, a shop worker who has another son aged five, described how she awoke from her coma on February 13. "I had absolutely no idea where I was and thought I might have dozed off for a while," she said.

Her husband Gary, 29, said he was unable to sleep or eat properly while his wife was in a coma: "I should have been celebrating but I never stopped praying that Tracey would pull through and Jordan would have a mum to hold him."

Bacon not artist of 'self-portrait'

The attribution of a painting to Francis Bacon is questioned in a letter to *The Times* today from Richard Stone, the writer on 20th-century art. He points out that the so-called self-portrait dated to around 1950 carries a Winsor & Newton label on the reverse of the "Rathbone" canvas board. He says that size of board did not exist then and it is inconceivable that the picture could have been painted by Bacon after his known works of 1933-36. Page 23

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Russia expels British 'spy' for second time

By RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW AND BILL FROST

A BRITISH businessman accused of spying was yesterday barred from Russia for the second time in seven years. Moscow alleged that Nigel Shakespeare had been engaged in "activities incompatible with his status", the diplomatic term for espionage.

The Russian Foreign Ministry told the British Embassy in Moscow that Mr Shakespeare, a security consultant, was no longer welcome and that his visa had been revoked. He was ordered out of the country for what was described as suspicious behaviour.

Mr Shakespeare, 46, who was last night with his wife's family in Highgate, north London, was said to be very upset by his expulsion. He strenuously denied spying and insisted that he had no idea why the Russians had forced him to board a London flight after he returned to Moscow from a business trip to Kazakhstan two weeks ago. "The charge is totally unjustified," he said, adding: "I am not going to speculate on why I was expelled... I thought I was off their blacklist... but

now it looks as though I will not be returning to Russia for the foreseeable future."

Mr Shakespeare's father, Colonel Gordon Shakespeare, from Hartley Wintney in Hampshire, said his son's career had been ruined by the expulsion. "He is absolutely shattered — the whole family is. He worked so hard on his Russian and was hoping his new job with a security consultancy would work out well."

The British Embassy in Moscow said that it was seeking clarification for the withdrawal of Mr Shakespeare's visa and would respond formally once the Russians had offered an explanation. In London the Foreign Office said: "We are aware of the reports and we are investigating."

Mr Shakespeare was previously expelled from Russia in May 1989 during a six-for-four spy row. He was the assistant military attaché at the British Embassy at the time. He later resigned from the armed forces and worked hard to re-establish good relations with

Continued on page 2, col 3

British Museum piazza grant

The British Museum was awarded £30 million by the Millennium Commission to transform the two-acre courtyard encircling its Round Reading Room into an indoor piazza with restaurants and cafes that will be open until late evening. Private benefactors have pledged £21 million towards the £72 million scheme, with £4 million coming from the Sainsbury family. The overcrowded museum's six million visitors a year make it the most visited of its type in the world. Page 4

Police start CS spray patrols

Police officers in England and Wales began patrolling with CS sprays despite warnings of possible health hazards to the public and potential claims for damages. More than 2,000 officers in 16 forces, including the Metropolitan Police, were issued with the canisters, which can incapacitate an assailant within seconds. They will be on trial for six months. Page 5

Customs using robot subs to find drugs

By NICK NUTTALL, TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

CUSTOMS officers are deploying robot submarines to stay a step ahead of international drug cartels.

Three robots, codenamed Phantom, are being secretly used at British ports including Southampton and Liverpool, to detect packets of cocaine, heroin and other drugs welded to hulls of ships.

Drug smugglers, especially from South America, have been increasingly using cargo vessels to ship drugs into European ports, including Britain. Captains of the vessels have become the innocent players in the worldwide narcotics trade, with the contraband welded to parts of the hull under the waterline by divers working for South American drug cartels. When the ships arrive at British ports, the packets are removed by divers working for the drug smugglers.

Doug Huntington, of Macartney Underwater Technology in Windermer, Cumbria, whose company supplied Customs with the robot vehicles, said yesterday: "Officers are using them to investigate sus-

pect ships from Panama, Colombia and the Caribbean." About 50 Colombian coal ships call every year at Liverpool alone, he said. "They are all suspect ships. The ships' captains have no idea what has been attached."

The underwater probes, details of which will be disclosed next week at Oceanology International in Brighton, are operated by remote control from a Customs van at the dock. Fitted with underwater cameras and lighting systems, the Phantoms relay pictures back to the van where officers view them on a television screen. Mr Huntington said the favourite spots where drug packets are welded lie just above the rudder.

Customs are operating three Phantoms. The machines, weighing 70lb, are about the "size of a dustbin". Many British ports are so polluted they can pose a risk to divers. Moreover, robots can work all day.

"I know Customs and Excise have had some successes with the Phantoms," Mr Huntington added.

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Mackay refuses to yield over pensions

By ALICE THOMSON
POLITICAL REPORTER

COSTS COULD BE OFFSET BY SAVINGS ON SOCIAL SECURITY SPENDING

THE Lord Chancellor is facing a battle in the Commons over his refusal to accept the principle of splitting pensions on divorce. A formidable cross-party alliance of women MPs was furious at Lord Mackay of Clashfern's decision yesterday not to back the Lords' amendment on the issue.

Peers voted by a majority of 21 on Thursday to change the Family Law Bill so that women could have an immediate share of their husbands' pensions when they divorced. But Lord Mackay said the move would be "quite impossible to bring in quickly".

Government sources appeared to be paving the way for a climbdown yesterday morning. But Lord Mackay, architect of the Bill, later made clear that he was likely to try to overturn the defeat when the Bill comes to the Commons. "Pension splitting is not a part of the divorce Bill. It would be quite impossible to do this in this Bill," he said.

Five Tory MPs have privately admitted that they may rebel if he does not support the idea. The MPs pointed out that almost every influential pension group, as well as the Law Society and CBI, had accepted it.

THE National Association of Pension Funds has attacked the Government's claim that splitting pensions on divorce, rather than at retirement, will cost £1.3 billion. The association says that in January, in answer to a parliamentary question, the Government said the cost would be offset by savings in social security and legal aid spending.

Splitting pensions at divorce could cause a loss of revenue for the Exchequer by allowing one spouse to pay income tax at a lower rate, but the savings on social security are likely to be considerable. At present 1.5 million women rely on the State alone to support them in retirement, compared with 250,000 men.

Sallie Quinn, of Fairshares, a group campaigning on behalf of divorced women, said: "Older women who traditionally are more dependent on their husbands will benefit most from a change in rules allowing pensions to be split at the moment of divorce."

As well as fearing the loss of revenue, the Government is believed to be reluctant to change the law because of the effect on non-contributory pension funds, such as those run by the Civil Service and the National Health Service. If pension-splitting is approved, divorced spouses could have the right to transfer large sums from these schemes before funds have been built up.

who spearheaded the Lords defeat, said the costs would be negligible and most technical problems had been sorted out already. "The Government has already had talks with the industry who are happy on almost every count. The Bill wouldn't come into force for another two years so any remaining bumps have got time to be smoothed out now," she said.

"The Government has calculated its figures on the premise that women would be able to take their pensions out of unfunded public-sector schemes and the Treasury would lose out because tax benefits would be doubled at divorce. That is rubbish. Under our proposals the new individual pensions would have to stay with the schemes. Also, by 2000 the loss of tax revenue would be offset by savings on income support."

Anne Ashworth, page 33

Briton is expelled by Russia

Continued from page 1
the Russian authorities and have himself removed from the Moscow Foreign Ministry's blacklist.

Married with four children, Mr Shakespear returned to Moscow in 1993 when he joined Price Waterhouse, the accountants. He resigned at the end of last year and joined Gorandel, a joint British-Russian company specialising in security services and risk management.

Moscow sources indicated yesterday that such firms often employed former KGB officers to advise foreigners on the threat posed to staff by the increasingly powerful Russian mafia and other criminal groups. Old tensions may have marked Mr Shakespear for victimisation.

It was not immediately clear last night if Mr Shakespear's expulsion was prompted by genuine Russian concern that a former British military attaché was working for a security company or if the move was part of a broader espionage game.



Businessman Nigel Shakespear in London last night

Adams is granted US visa

Continued from page 1
one. He made his decision to back the Government 20 minutes before the vote. "He said if he lost the vote this would damage the peace process in Northern Ireland and developments he hoped to bring to fruition would be delayed," Mr Marshall said in the *Hampstead and Highgate Express*.

Donald Dewar, Labour's Chief Whip, said yesterday that Mr Marshall's report of the meetings was "remarkable. I am saddened that the tragic and delicate situation in Northern Ireland should be used to force a reluctant Conservative MP to vote against his judgment on an unrelated matter."

Mr Dewar said that Mr Marshall's account meant that the Prime Minister's assurance that no deals had been done "must now be seriously questioned."

Police arrest 19 at Newbury protest

Police arrested 19 demonstrators on the route of the Newbury bypass in Berkshire yesterday as protesters and bailiffs played a violent and dangerous aerial ballet as huge platform cranes moved in to remove protesters from their tree-top homes. After 17 hours over two days only six demonstrators, about a third, have been removed from the tree-tops. Nick Blandy, the under-sheriff of Berkshire who is charged with carrying out the High Court orders compelling the evictions, conceded the operation was potentially dangerous. But he added: "If there is a misadventure then the protesters will be the authors of their own misfortune."

Underwear man freed

A father of five who was jailed for attacking a man who had stolen underwear from his washing line was freed on bail yesterday pending an appeal. Gary Titmus, 32, was jailed for four months on Thursday, while the thief was let off with a caution. Judge Daniel Rodwell, QC, sitting at Luton Crown Court, granted Titmus bail. The appeal against the sentence is expected to be heard next week.

Race abuse PC resigns

A police constable was asked to resign after allegations that he made offensive racist comments while off-duty in a pub, police said yesterday. PC Dale Holden was drinking in a public house in Loughborough when the remarks were allegedly made. A member of the public overheard the comments and reported the officer and a disciplinary hearing was held. The officer is planning to appeal.

Exporter convicted

A livestock exporter was convicted yesterday of dangerous driving after allegations that he deliberately drove into a group of protesters outside the Essex port of Brightlingsea. Roger Mills, 54, of Framlingham, Suffolk, was fined £1,000 and disqualified from driving for 12 months by Harwich magistrates. Mills denied the charge and sentence was suspended pending his appeal to the Crown Court.

Hostages criticise Lang

John McCarthy and Brian Keenan today criticise ministers for citing the fate of the two former Middle East hostages as justification for not telling Parliament about arms-related sales to Iraq. In a letter to *The Times* they describe television remarks by Ian Lang, the President of the Board of Trade, in the wake of the Scott report as "offensive, misleading, and disingenuous".

Letters, page 23

Offer accepted

Steve Wright, 37, a producer for Yorkshire Television who refused to answer a leap year proposal made on air by Debbie Lindley, 22, a weather girl, accepted the offer yesterday morning on GMTV when he handed her a ring.

Terrorist condemns ending of ceasefire

By NICHOLAS WATT
IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

A LEADING IRA terrorist has launched a scathing attack on the IRA's decision to end its ceasefire. Joe O'Connell, a member of the Balcombe Street gang, described the resumption of IRA violence as "the most stupid, blinkered and ill-conceived decision ever made by a revolutionary body".

O'Connell, 44, who has served 21 years of a 30-year sentence for his part in the IRA bombing campaign in England in 1974, called on all republicans to press for an immediate restoration of the ceasefire.

In a letter to the Sinn Féin newspaper, *Republican News*, he said that he did not believe the IRA's decision could be justified after 18 months of peace.

O'Connell, who is serving his sentence at Full Sutton jail near York, wrote: "The broad nationalist consensus that has evolved as a result of the IRA ceasefire is the most positive development of it... This is well worth bearing with and giving the chance to bring the results that are hoped for."

O'Connell's letter was one of a number of letters published by the newspaper which have criticised the resumption of IRA violence.

Council tax rises well above inflation

By IAN MURRAY
COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT

THE average council tax bill will rise by more than double the present 2.9 per cent inflation rate, according to a survey of over 300 authorities that have now fixed their budgets.

Although the average increase will be around 6.1 per cent, there are huge variations between different authorities. There are now so many anomalies that local authority associations believe the Government's system of allocating grants is becoming unworkable.

The average increase is below the 8 per cent level predicted last year by William

Waldegrave, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, but it means that most householders will have to find about another 70p a week. Despite paying more, however, most areas will see a reduction in services as councils everywhere have cut back staff in order to stay inside their Government imposed spending limit.

Around £400 million worth of savings have been made, largely through job cuts. Even with cuts Oxfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Essex have set budgets above the limit will try to persuade the Government that they must have the extra money. Every other county is to spend up to its limit.

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Verdict of misadventure recorded Family to sue over death of teenager after operation

By KATE ALDERSON

THE parents of a teenager who died during a routine cosmetic operation to have her ears pinned back are to sue the hospital where their daughter died after a coroner recorded a verdict of misadventure yesterday. They have been granted legal aid.

Janine Connor, 14, was undergoing surgery at Withington Hospital, Manchester, when she suffered a cardiac arrest. The inquest at Swinton, Salford, heard how ten doctors in the operating theatre were unable to use equipment which could have saved her because it was so old that they had not been trained to use it. Janine's mother, Margaret Usher, 46, said after the verdict: "I want to know how Janine died. I feel as if we haven't had any answers to-day. I think it is horrendous that such old equipment was in use. It should be withdrawn from all hospitals."

Martin Coppel, the coroner, told the hearing: "Janine went for the operation she requested and as a direct result of that she died. I will therefore record a verdict of death by misadventure."

At the hearing, evidence was given that Janine, from Ashton-under-Lyne, Greater

Manchester, opted for a general anaesthetic although she had originally intended to have a local anaesthetic.

An anaesthetist noticed that her face was swelling at the end of the operation and she suffered a cardiac arrest. Doctors said gas was not escaping from her body after being pumped in by the ventilator and so her heart was not able to pump properly.

When doctors tried to give the teenager electric shocks from two 25-year-old defibrillator machines they were unable to get them to discharge because they did not know that at least 5lb of pressure had to be applied to the paddles on her chest.

Almost ten minutes were lost before a third defibrillator, which the doctors could work, arrived. Eventually, doctors had to cut open Janine's chest and manually massage her heart to get it beating normally. She never regained consciousness and died six days later in January last year at the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital.

Mr Coppel said the 20-year-old ventilator machine used on Janine was regarded as "a good solid work horse" and it remained a mystery as to what

had gone wrong to cause Janine's breathing problem.

He said that very few medical people would have been trained in the use of defibrillators when the type available were manufactured. "None of them knew about the modus operandi," he said. "There was a set of written instruction nearby. I suppose, under pressure, one doesn't look to see something in writing."

The delay in giving Janine defibrillator shocks "cannot have helped and should not have occurred". He added that the medical team were competent and made their best efforts to save Janine and had almost succeeded.

Neil Kinsella, the family's solicitor, said he would pursue a civil claim for negligence against the hospital trust.

South Manchester Hospitals NHS Trust issued a statement after the verdict expressing sympathy for the family. "It is regrettable that there was some unfamiliarity with the use of the first two defibrillators but there was no evidence that this contributed to the death of the patient," it said, adding that the old defibrillators were no longer in use at either Withington or Wythenshawe hospital.



Taking the high road: the duke's body borne on a gun carriage pulled by 12 members of the Atholl Highlanders to its final resting place

Private army guards duke on last march

By ALAN HAMILTON

THE Duke of Atholl, Britain's only bachelor duke, was given the Highland equivalent of a state funeral yesterday when he was buried in the grounds of his Perthshire family seat accompanied by the ceremony and ritual of Europe's last private army.

Draped in his clan tartan of Murray of Atholl, the duke's body was borne on a gun carriage pulled by 12 members of the Atholl Highlanders to its final resting place in the family burial plot in the grounds of Blair Castle, his ancestral home at Blair

Atholl. George Iain Murray, aged 64, the 10th duke, died on Tuesday in hospital in Perth, where he had been since having a stroke in December.

Some 250 family, friends and estate workers attended his funeral service in the ballroom of the white-walled castle, one of Perthshire's major tourist attractions. A conspicuous absence among the mourners was John Murray, the duke's South African third cousin who has reluctantly inherited the title in the absence of any children of the duke, but who has been dispossessed of the castle and its 70,000 acres since the late duke

handed them over to a charitable trust. Mr Murray, 57, a retired surveyor who has spent his life in South Africa, told *The Times* he had no desire to inherit the estate, did not want to live in Scotland, and had no intention of using the title of 11th Duke of Atholl.

The funeral procession marched behind the pipes and drums of the Atholl Highlanders, a colourful anachronism of 90 estate workers and Scottish nobility created by Queen Victoria in 1844 and permitted to exist as a private bodyguard to the Dukes of Atholl ever since.

The Very Rev Professor Robert Barbour, a family friend who fought with the duke's father when he was killed in action in Italy in 1945, said of the late departed duke: "He was a man of sharp intelligence, a brilliant bridge player, a lover of the hills of Atholl, of walking and stalking and shooting, a financier and effective manager, but above all, despite his shyness, a friend to many people."

Praising his revival of his private army, Mr Barbour recalled how the duke once told Tam Dalyell, the Labour MP: "When I kick the bucket, I suppose the only thing people will remember is my private army."

Neighbour must get rid of pig and pay £35,000

By KATE ALDERSON

A MAN who thrust a Vietnamese pot-bellied pig into a feud with his neighbours was last night dealt a £35,000 blow by a judge.

Paul Telford, 35, a company director, was given two months to get rid of Flossie the pig, and told to pay £15,600 damages to Frank and Mary Bray and their £20,000 legal costs.

Mr Bray, 62, claimed his life was made a misery when Mr Telford became his neighbour in Tynemouth six years ago. During a four-day hearing at Newcastle upon Tyne County Court the Brays claimed Mr Telford began his campaign against them by playing tape-recordings of the Brays dog barking very loudly as a protest against the noise it made.

He was also alleged to have revved his car's engines, played with his jet ski at any time of the day or night and turned on a compressor when he left the house.

Flossie became Mr Telford's garden pet in 1991 and the court heard the pig was noisy, smelly, attracted flies and left droppings all over the garden. The Brays eventually took their neighbour to court to seek damages and an injunction to stop him being a nuisance.

Mr Telford, a bachelor who owns a computer company, claimed the barking of the Brays' dog had driven him mad and he simply wanted his neighbours to understand the noise it made. He told the court that Mr Bray was a cantankerous busy-body and likened him to Victor Meldrew in the television series *One Foot in the Grave*. Julian Hallom, the recorder, said Mr Telford's actions had amounted to nuisance over the past six years. He added: "I want them (the Brays) to be able to enjoy their property in peace and quiet. They should be allowed to sleep at night."

After the hearing Mr Telford said he felt heartbroken at losing his pig. "I will miss Flossie so much, she has been a good friend."

Mother who lied to win bail for husband is jailed

By BILL FROST

A MOTHER who lied to police to win her husband's freedom was herself jailed for three months at the Old Bailey yesterday.

The judge told Nora Tracey, 54, that she was forced to jail her, as an example to her husband Patrick, who is still at large. The court was told that the couple ran a thriving hotel and restaurant business but were driven to the edge of bankruptcy by the recession. Mr Tracey turned to crime, organising a highly lucrative passport fraud. But he was caught, tried and convicted and was awaiting sentence when he absconded.

The Old Bailey was told that as the family's debts mounted, he had been unable to raise enough money to pay for bail pending sentence. Mrs Tracey, of Chessington, Surrey, a qualified nurse who worked for the Mental Health Trust, was told by one of her husband's associates that she could present a bogus bank statement showing she could afford the £10,000 surety.

She took the advice and her husband was freed on bail. Within days he was on the run and is now believed to have fled the country. Mrs Tracey, who admitted using a false

instrument with intent, was arrested when her husband failed to appear at Southwark Crown Court for sentence. His co-defendants were jailed for six months.

Counsel for Mrs Tracey said that her husband's treachery had been devastating. She had been a model citizen and the middle-class family had been successful until the recession had hit their business in the early 1990s.

Recorder Andrew Patience, QC, told Mrs Tracey: "It gives me absolutely no pleasure to see you standing in the dock. I greatly admire you for what you and your family have achieved and for what you've done yourself in bringing up three children. You have achieved a great deal in your work and are spoken of highly by those who know you. But I have to have in mind persons in the position of your husband who might be tempted to act in this way. The temptation in the future might be greater if such persons think others like yourself might escape the consequences."

Mrs Tracey's three children, now in their 20s, were too upset to comment outside court but indicated that an appeal was being considered.

BA jumbo jet returns with special delivery

By JOANNA BALE

A British Airways jumbo jet which left Delhi with 345 passengers returned with 346 when the aircraft was forced to turn back after a woman gave birth.

Hildegard Meyer, from Switzerland, had complained of a stomach ache to a steward four hours after take-off, but quickly realised she was going into labour. A male Indian doctor and female gynaecologist came forward after an appeal by the captain, and as the plane flew at 30,000 ft Ms Meyer was taken to the first class deck where a makeshift

delivery room was set up. The captain headed back to Delhi while stewardesses Leah Clay and Carole Hayer helped with the delivery. Ms Meyer gave birth to a healthy 6lb 6oz boy as the wheels of the plane touched down again at Delhi.

A BA spokeswoman said: "A huge cheer went up among the passengers when the captain announced the birth."

BA said it was too early to say if the woman could be penalised for travelling after the 36-week limit for pregnant women. "At the moment we are just happy that mother and baby are doing well."

Me Phil Collins, you Tarzan

THE rock singer Phil Collins is to write the songs for Walt Disney's latest big-budget cartoon. It was confirmed yesterday, *Tarzan*, due for release in 1998, will feature at least six songs by the Genesis drummer, who won a Grammy in 1984 for the title song of the film *Against All Odds*.

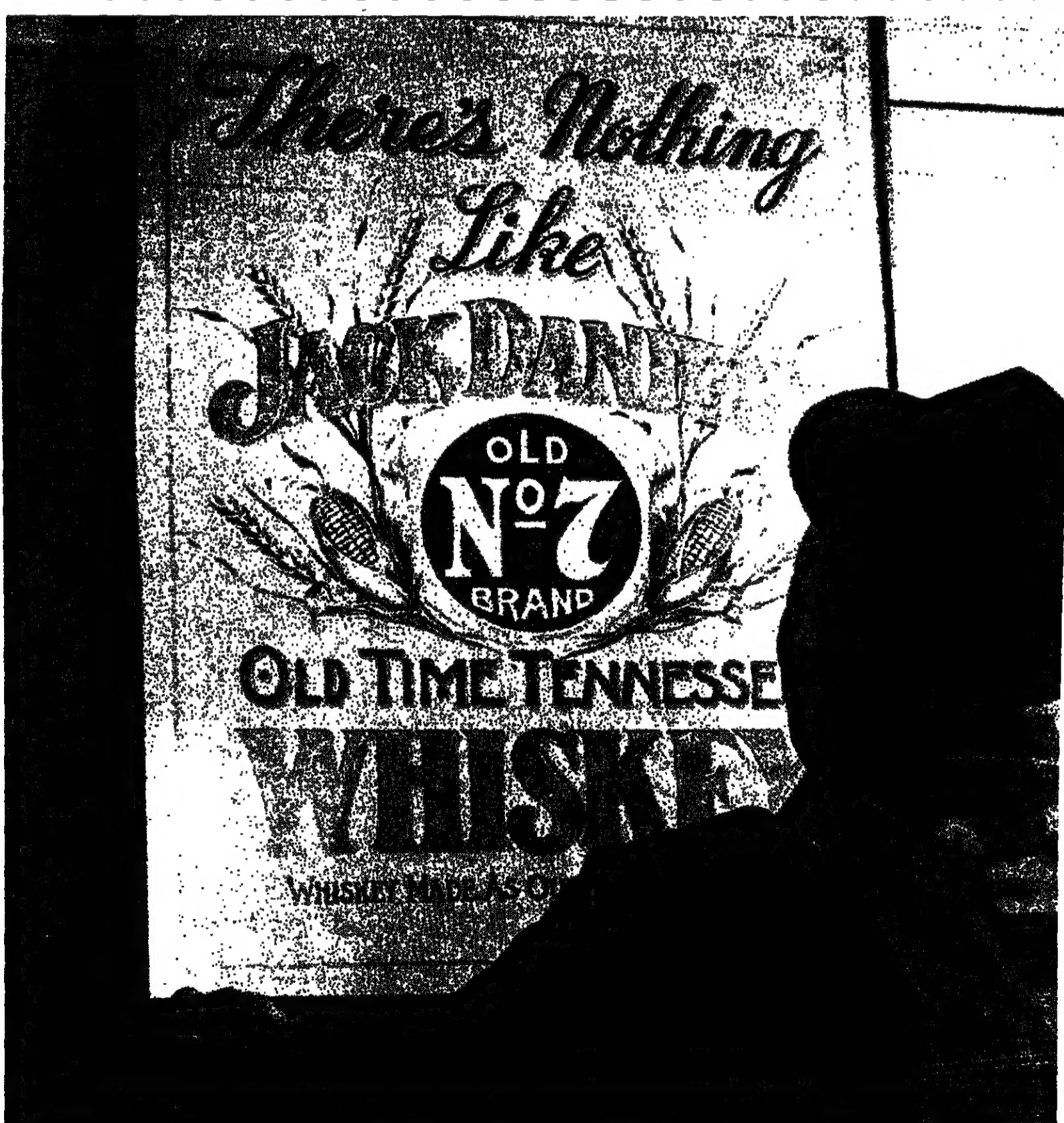
Tarzan is in pre-production and Disney has not chosen any actors for the roles of Tarzan or Jane. Peter Schneider, president of Walt Disney feature animation, said he thought that Collins would bring "something very

special to the creative process. He is one of the greatest songwriters of our time and we have long admired his ability to capture emotion and humour in his work."

Collins, 44, who was recently divorced from his American wife, Jill, lives in a rented chalet in Hermance, near Geneva. He has won six Grammy awards and sold an estimated 60 million albums. His most recent album was *Both Sides*, released in 1993. He has written songs for the films *White Knight* and *Buster*, in which he starred.



Collins will write at least six songs for film



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Death-crash sentences increased

The complex, described as London's answer to the Pyramid at the Louvre, will enhance the townscape. Under designs being prepared by Sir Norman Foster and Partners, the inner court, concealed

Dr Anderson on the roof of the museum's Round Reading Room yesterday. The scheme will reveal an inner court that has been hidden by the reading room for 150 years.

The court then increased from three to five years the sentence of Anthony Jackson, 24, of Bradford, who had killed a teacher while driving at speed the wrong way down a one-way street. The original sentences in both cases had caused anger among relatives and the local communities.

Joseph O'Connor, being tried on six manslaughter charges arising from the sinking of the trawler *Pescado*, has been charged with an additional manslaughter charge in relation to life-saving equipment. He denies all charges.

Judgment has been reserved until next week in a High Court action by Terry Venables, England football coach, against a former business partner from whom he is trying to reclaim £144,359 after a failed pubs venture.

Car numberplate NICKY was bought for £71,000 yesterday as 80 plates fetched £13 million at a Brooks auction in London. IGW went for £69,800 and an anonymous buyer phoned home before spending £16,900 on I ET.

A 33-year-old man died in hospital early yesterday after he was shot outside a fish and chip shop in Winson Green, Birmingham. Bystanders heard four shots and saw a car speed away, leaving the man lying in the street.

Shopping shock
The wheels on 250 shopping trolleys at a supermarket in Windermere, Cumbria, had to be changed because customers were receiving electric shocks. The complaints started after the store had a new floor covering fitted.

The latest design is simpler and bolder than earlier versions. The courtyard is much more open and the staircases around the rotunda have been set back to reveal its splendour.

Mr Annenberg, 87, made his fortune from publishing, television and radio stations. In 1991 he promised his art collection, one of the finest in the world, to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, of which he is a trustee. More than 50 Impressionist and Post-Impressionist works, worth \$1 billion (£670 million),

Museums in Los Angeles, Washington and Philadelphia mounted a discreet campaign for at least part of the collection. But Mr Annenberg said: "It is my intention that all my paintings should go to the

He served as Ambassador to Britain between 1969 and 1974. In 1976 the Queen

years ago. Mr Sainsbury, chairman of the company, has been described as one of the richest men in the country. Henry Moore was his godfather, and he grew up in a house full of art treasures. His philanthropy extends beyond the arts to education, mental health and the Third World. Lord Owen has called him "one of the most imaginative philanthropists we are likely to see this century" because he "allows the seeds to germinate and grow".

A large donation from his parents, Sir Robert and Lady Sainsbury, enabled the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts to be established at East Anglia University.



Sainsbury: praised for his imagination

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ALLIED
DUNBAR

[illegible]

Mother of snooker ace cleared of porn plot charges

BY CAROL MIDGLEY

THE MOTHER OF the snooker ace Ronnie O'Sullivan was cleared of dealing in allegedly obscene magazines and videos yesterday.

Maria O'Sullivan, 39, was said to have received a string of detailed instructions issued by her convicted murderer husband Ronald from his prison cell to keep the "thriving" business empire afloat.

The lucrative operation, centred on Soho in London, was said to have raked in hundreds of thousands of pounds of material depicting a variety of sexual acts.

The mother of two, who lives in a £750,000 mansion in Chigwell, Essex, pleaded not guilty to conspiracy to having obscene articles for publication for gain at the start of a trial at Southwark Crown Court eight weeks ago.

Several weeks into the hearing, Mrs O'Sullivan, who was on trial with her 40-year-old husband and her brother-in-law Paul, 31, and several others, was discharged from the proceedings after a report in *The Sun* newspaper was said to have breached a Contempt of Court Act order.

Philip Singer, QC, for the prosecution, told the court yesterday that as all her co-defendants had been cleared of the charge, the Crown felt it "had little alternative" but to offer no evidence.

Judge Cotran then told a smiling Mrs O'Sullivan that he would be entering a formal not guilty verdict against her.

During the trial Mrs O'Sullivan was released from a 12-month prison sentence imposed at the Old Bailey last year for £100,000 VAT evasion in connection with the business.

Her co-defendants told the court in evidence, or through counsel, that the magazines and videos the company dealt in were not obscene, and if they were, it did not know details of the contents.

The judge banned publication about the case until the end of the trial yesterday.

For the second half of last year and the beginning of this, Ronnie O'Sullivan, who was just 20 in February, was battling to cope with the fact that both his parents were behind bars. Mr O'Sullivan, ranked world number three and the youngest player ever to qualify for the world championships, was said to have been in "complete disarray".

Since the start of the season last year Mr O'Sullivan, who is nicknamed The Rocket and was tipped to oust Stephen Hendry as world number one, has been knocked out of each of the seven world ranking tournaments in which he has played. Having to look after his younger sister added to the former United Kingdom champion's burden. Clive

Everton, the editor of *Snooker Scene*, said that Mr O'Sullivan has coped reasonably well when his father was convicted of stabbing to death Charlie Kray's driver Bruce Bryan, 31, in 1992 after drinking in London. But it was the final straw when his mother was jailed.

Earlier yesterday in court, News Group Newspapers, publishers of *The Sun*, were fined £10,000 and a senior journalist accused of "crass incompetence" by Judge Cotran for a "very serious" contempt of court.

The judge said that the story in *The Sun's* sports section, headlined "Don't there Mum", quoted Mr O'Sullivan saying he would celebrate his mother's release from a year-long prison sentence by keeping a firm grip on the Benson and Hedges Masters snooker title.

The judge said inquiries had shown that when the story was first submitted the night lawyer spotted references to Mrs O'Sullivan's conviction and sentence and to her husband serving a life sentence for murder. He pointed those out to a chief sub-editor, who deleted any mention of Mr O'Sullivan but not the information concerning his wife.

"This seems to me an act of crass incompetence on his part," said the judge.

The judge agreed it was not an intentional contempt.

Woman in baby death case must face court

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

CAROLINE BEALE, the Briton accused of murdering her baby in New York and trying to smuggle its body on to an airliner, must go back to court on Monday as lawyers continue to argue over a plea bargain that would allow her to return to Britain.

Judge Robert Hanophy told a brief hearing yesterday that the prosecution and defence would continue discussions over the weekend. The District Attorney wants Ms Beale to return to jail as part of a plea bargain that would reduce her charge from murder to manslaughter. Her lawyer insists that she should be allowed to return to Britain, having already served eight months on remand.

Ms Beale's father, Peter, said yesterday that the order for her to return to court was legal torture. "Enough is enough," he said. "Caroline does feel pain, she has been tortured. As far as we are concerned, this is an atrocity."

Ms Beale, 32, of Chingford, east London, was arrested 18 months ago as she tried to board a flight from New York to London with the corpse of her newborn baby wrapped in a plastic bag inside her rucksack. The baby was born less than 24 hours earlier in a hotel room in Manhattan.

Michael Dowd, her lawyer, said: "We are at the point where we either go forward to trial or reach an agreement and any agreement must involve her going home."



Caroline Beale leaving the Supreme Court in New York with her father yesterday

British tourist 'attacked by troops'

FROM MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN LARNACA

TWO British soldiers serving with the King's Own Royal Border Regiment in Cyprus will be charged with assaulting a British tourist who suffered severe concussion after a late-night incident outside a pub in Larnaca.

Peter Kelly, 23, was "badly battered and bruised, but in a stable condition and out of danger", a doctor at Larnaca hospital said. He was due to fly back to Britain yesterday with his girlfriend, Jane Cole, 21, who had allegedly been insulted by the soldiers in the incident on Wednesday.

The trouble came hours after the regiment's commanding officer lifted a ban on his men visiting pubs on the Larnaca tourist strip following a brawl last Friday.

The incidents have appalled Army commanders waiting for a Larnaca court to pass judgement later this month on three Royal Green Jackets accused of kidnapping, conspiring to rape and killing a Danish woman in the resort of Ayia Napa 19 months ago.

"This really does not help at all," a senior officer said. Ayia Napa has since been out of bounds to all military and civilian personnel from Britain's two sovereign bases.

The King's Own Royal Border Regiment replaced the Royal Green Jackets in January. The Army says that only a tiny minority of off-duty soldiers cause trouble.

Police sources said Wednesday's incident began when a group of soldiers were allegedly abusive to Miss Cole. "It appears the boyfriend went outside with two of the men," the source said. "She alleges when they came back in they told her they had sorted out her boyfriend."

"She went back to her apartment but he was not there so she called the police who found him concussed in hospital." Doctors said he had no brain damage and his skull had not been fractured.

Miss Cole was unwilling to talk to reporters yesterday. Doctors said Mr Kelly was still too unwell to come to the telephone.

Hewitt seeks millions for royal kiss-and-tell interview

BY JOANNA BALE



Hewitt: five-year affair with Princess of Wales

JAMES HEWITT is asking up to £4 million for a filmed interview in which he discloses details of his love affair with the Princess of Wales. The former cavalry officer, who had a five-year relationship with the Princess, is said to talk frankly about how she confided in him about her marriage problems and how they became lovers.

Anna Pasternak, who wrote the book *Princess In Love*, a sugary account of the affair, and Henry Cole, a film director, are in secret negotiations with television companies interested in buying the

worldwide rights. A film industry source said: "They are asking millions. It is being presented as a package in which Hewitt retains full editorial control and that package could cost £4 million but I am sure someone will buy it."

Mr Cole, whose 1994 film *Mad Dogs and Englishmen*, starring Elizabeth Hurley as a heroin addict, was panned by critics, was also involved in negotiating Miss Pasternak's deal with the American CBS network to make a television film of her book, which starts shooting this month.

The Hewitt interview was recorded by the award-winning former ITN cameraman Sebastian Rich, who

made a fly-on-the-wall ITV documentary about the Prince and Princess of Wales ten years ago, called *In Private*. In *Public* Mr Rich, who has worked as a freelance since leaving ITN in 1993, filmed Mr Hewitt at his home in Devon, answering 130 questions drawn up by Miss Pasternak.

British and US television networks yesterday expressed interest in the footage, its appeal heightened by the news of the royal divorce, but none would admit to be negotiating a deal.

The film gives details of how Mr Hewitt taught Princes William and Harry to ride and how the affair was conducted at Kensington Palace and

his home. It is expected to be cut to an hour of footage mirroring the Princess's *Panorama* interview last year, in which she confessed to an affair with Mr Hewitt.

Mr Hewitt, 37, was persuaded to make the documentary by Miss Pasternak. He was branded a cad for co-operating with her book.

He gave away nothing about the interview when he emerged briefly to drive away from his home yesterday in the village of Bratton.

The London office of CBS News, the American network, said: "There was a scramble for Diana's *Panorama* interview and this is undoubtedly going to be the same." NBC Super-

channel, which broadcasts across America and Europe, said: "We are definitely interested in buying this programme but have not managed to do so as yet."

Sky Television said it had rejected the interview and was urging other broadcasters to follow suit. Ian Cook, head of news, said: "We are concerned that this type of proposal would see producers receiving large sums of money for an interview in which James Hewitt does not submit himself to independent, rigorous questioning."

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Letters, page 23

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هكذا في الاما

Latest SAS TV drama fuels call for secrecy

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

MILITARY chiefs have been angered by a new ITV documentary series about the SAS, in which former members take part in reconstructions of missions.

The series, *SAS - The Soldiers' Stories*, coincides with moves by the Ministry of Defence and the SAS Regimental Association to make former and serving members of the regiment sign lifetime confidentiality contracts.

The gagging proposal comes after the recent publication of books by former soldiers, including the best-selling *Bravo Two Zero* by Andy McNab, and the screening of a controversial television film, *The One That Got Away*, based on the experiences of Chris Ryan, a former SAS trooper. The two-hour programme about an ill-fated Gulf War patrol provoked a storm of protest from survivors of the mission and relatives of the deceased when it was shown two weeks ago.

The new seven-part series has been made with the co-operation of a dozen former SAS members. One will appear to camera, the others will be shown in silhouette or wearing black balaclavas. They will be seen taking part in reconstructions of SAS missions, including the storming of the Iranian embassy in London in 1980.

Steve Clark, controller of factual programmes at Carlton Television, which has commissioned the series, said the programme would provide the definitive version of the siege and its relief.

"It was shot and directed by some of the men who actually took part," he said. "They made us re-shoot everything until we got it right. We filmed it in Princes Gate, a few doors away from the actual location." Mr Clark said that the

programmes take the form of narrative by the former soldiers, some of whom had only recently left the service. The reconstructions take the form of flashbacks.

Other missions dramatised in the series include the battle of Mirbat in Oman in 1972, when nine SAS men held off an attacking force of 400 local insurgents in a small fort. The incident has gone down in regimental legend as one of the SAS's finest missions.

There are also reconstructions of several Gulf War missions, though not the ill-fated Bravo Two Zero mission, and episodes from the Falklands war, including SAS raids on airbases and action behind enemy lines.

The Ministry of Defence said it was aware of the series but had not co-operated with it. "Our only interest in it would be to prevent anything going out that damages national security," a spokesman said.

Privately, however, defence chiefs have made it clear they wish that the series had never been made. They fear that, together with the McNab and Ryan books, it could unleash a flood of important information about the highly secretive service.

Traditionally, the regiment has shunned overt publicity, relying instead on carefully placed media stories over which it has tight control and which allow it to bask in the glory of its heroic achievements.

Although former SAS members — including Sir Peter de la Billière, a former SAS commander who led British forces in the Gulf War — have talked to the media before and some have spoken openly about the SAS, the ITV documentary will be the first series dedicated entirely to the regiment and the first to include dramatic reconstructions made by those who took part in them.

To prevent further details emerging about the regiment's operations, David Lyon, Colonel Commandant of the SAS Regimental Association, recently sent letters and questionnaires to members on the regiment's secrecy proposals telling them that unofficial coverage of its past and present activities was damaging the reputation of the regiment.

The association is also proposing to create a permanent disclosure committee to advise HQ Special Forces and the Ministry of Defence.



Potter: raced to finish his final two series

BBC and C4 to honour Potter's dying wish

By ALEXANDRA FREAN

THE dying wish of Denis Potter will come true next month when the BBC and Channel 4 screen the playwright's last two television works, *Karaoke* and *Cold Lazarus*, in the first joint venture of its kind.

BBC1 announced yesterday that it would screen *Karaoke*, starring Albert Finney and Julie Christie, on Sundays from April 28, with the four episodes being repeated each week on Channel 4 on Monday.



Saffron Burrows and Albert Finney who star in Denis Potter's *Karaoke*

days. The drama is semi-autobiographical and tells the story of a writer who believes his own characters are coming alive around him.

The sequel, *Cold Lazarus*, with Albert Finney and Frances de la Tour, will then be shown by Channel 4 on Sundays from May 26, repeated on BBC1 from May 27. It is set in 1938, where a privileged elite is under siege from a guerrilla movement. Potter's

last public request was that the two broadcasters join forces to produce and schedule the two dramas, which he raced to complete before his death from cancer in June 1994.

Michael Grade, chief executive of Channel 4, said that the two broadcasters had done everything they could to fulfil their promise to Potter. "I'm sure the audience and critics will agree that these last two series stand up there with the

very best of Dennis's work." Alan Ventob, controller of BBC1, said: "I am glad that we are able to offer such a fitting tribute to one of the most original voices in television drama."

□ Ewan McGregor, one of the stars of *Trainspotting*, the controversial film about drug addicts, has landed his first Hollywood film role. He will take the lead role as a morgue attendant opposite Nick Nolte in *Nightwatch*.

Soprano plans opera centre for Wales

THE Welsh soprano Dame Gwyneth Jones is planning to set up an opera performance and international study centre at Craig-y-nos castle, Powys, which has a theatre said to be a miniature of Wagner's Festspielhaus at Bayreuth.

Dame Gwyneth said it would be her gift to Wales. "I'd rather do something I can build up and control than leave money after my death for scholarships. I intend establishing a charitable trust and hope to bring in other interested people."

Her announcement follows the rejection of the bid for lottery funding by Cardiff Bay Opera House. Dame Gwyneth, a trustee of that scheme, said: "It's disgraceful that Wales doesn't have its own place to stage opera. We'll get an opera house by hook or by crook." The project would be a step towards that.

She added: "It's a shame most of the finest Welsh singers have had to leave Wales to do their studies." The architect Roger Clive-Powell is to look into the plans.

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Robert Harris on Diana and the Establishment



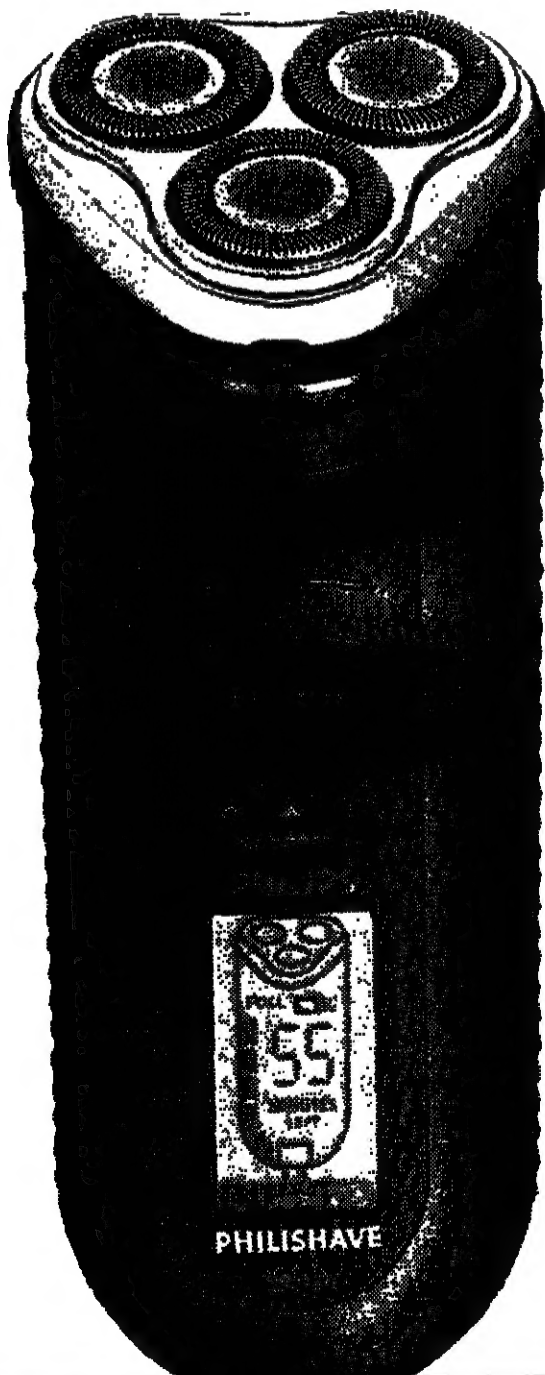
At least 50% of the manipulation has come from the other side, yet it is Diana who ends up with the reputation as the villainous schemer.

It has been a classic Establishment job, with no fingerprints left at the scene...

Robert Harris begins a new weekly political column in *News Review* — *The Sunday Times* tomorrow

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Satellite puts drivers on the information super-highway

By KEVIN EASON
MOTORING EDITOR

DRIVERS looking for a hotel, restaurant or petrol station in an unfamiliar area will soon be able to contact a satellite for help. The OnStar car computer system will also enable them to contact rescue services or send messages to their families.

The equipment will be installed next year on General Motors' Cadillac range. Car owners will be offered a mobile cellular telephone, programmed for a series of services that can be called by pushing a programmed button. The telephone is linked directly to a GM control room, connected to the Global Positioning System network of 20 military satellites.

The satellites track the motorist by signalling to a small transmitter inside the car. Its computer responds to messages from the control room.

Cadillac owners locked out of their cars, for instance, can telephone a freephone number, identify the car using code numbers and a password and ask the control room to trigger the locks to open at a specified time. If they have also locked their mobile telephone inside the car, the freephone number can be called from a telephone box.

If the car breaks down on a

Motorists face a future of day-long jams on main routes around big cities by 2005. A road "stress map" by Transport Department officials shows that most motorways are heading for day-time gridlock if current traffic growth continues and the motorway roads programme is not revived. The worst affected stretches would be most of the M25, most major routes out of London, and motorways around Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds and Sheffield.

strange road, drivers can push a callout button, enabling the control room to fix their position on a digital map and send a rescue lorry. Drivers involved in a "road rage" attack can lock their doors and hit an emergency button on the mobile telephone; the control room will fix the car's position and send in the police.

A driver running low on fuel can receive directions to the nearest petrol station, or find out where the nearest hotel, restaurant or cash machine is. Controllers will also send messages home to worried families or carry out missed errands.

OnStar also works as an anti-theft device because the

control room is always able to pinpoint the location of the car, wherever it is driven in the world.

G. Richard Waggoner, president of GM's North American Operations, said: "People are spending more time in their vehicles than ever before and our research shows a tremendous interest in user-friendly technologies that can make driving more secure and enjoyable. Until now, the information revolution has touched the automobile in only the most mechanical and operational ways."

The equipment could be extended to other General Motors models, including those made by Vauxhall, within two years.

□ Ford recalled more than 150,000 Ford Fiestas yesterday after discovering a seatbelt fault. The company urged drivers of G and H-registered cars to take them to Ford dealers for safety checks.

The decision follows an investigation by the Driving Standards Agency, which received complaints from driving schools claiming that the belts might not work in an emergency stop. Repairs on the cars, made between March 1989 and September 1990, will be carried out free.

Peter Barnard,
Car 96, page 2

Gourmet ticket for InterCity franchise bidder

By JONATHAN PRYNN
TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

THE award-winning chef Marco Pierre White has been enlisted to back the management bid to buy the InterCity East Coast line.

Mr White, the first British-born chef to be awarded three Michelin stars, is the latest gastronomic attempt to improve the stale-sandwich image of railway catering. His predecessors have included Clement Freud and Prue Leith.

The East Coast management team is believed to have plans for a three-tier catering service on its line: a silver-service restaurant with a menu overseen by Mr White, a mid-price, sit-down cafeteria, and a mass-market "crisps and Coke" buffet car.

Further food experience is provided by Lord Sheppard of Didgmore, chairman of the management bid company, Wendfordbray. He stepped down this week as chairman of Grand Metropolitan, the owner of Burger King and Häagen-Dazs ice-cream.

The five-hour journey from London King's Cross to Edinburgh is one of the few on the British Rail network long enough for chefs to prepare and serve a meal of Michelin-star quality. It is heavily used



Marco Pierre White is advising on food on the move

by executives. BT, another adviser to the management team, is thought to be helping with plans for fax machines, chair-back video screens and other electronic equipment on the trains.

The bid is being backed by 31 Royal Bank of Scotland, CGEA, a French transport company, and Intermediate Capital Group. Rival bids have been made by Sea Containers, National Express and Stagecoach. The successful bidder is likely to take control of the service at the end of

May. Three other franchises for which bids closed yesterday were Gatwick Express, which has received bids from two management teams and Virgin Group; Midland Main Line; and Network South Central.

Roger Salmon, the rail franchise director, said that 19 companies had expressed interest in bidding for South Wales & West and the Cardiff Railway Company, the latest franchises to go on the market.

Food and drink,
The Magazine, page 49

The £3bn tunnel rail link: good deal or rip-off?

THE £3 billion Channel tunnel rail link contract awarded to the London & Continental Railways consortium has been simultaneously hailed as an historic breakthrough in the modernisation of Britain's archaic infrastructure and condemned as a monumental rip-off for the taxpayer.

Which view is correct and who has got the best of the deal — the Government or the private interests represented by the consortium?

□ Why is the rail link being built?

To reduce journey times on Eurostar passenger services between London and the Continent and on commuter services from Kent and to help to regenerate run-down areas of east London and north Kent. Also because of government embarrassment that Eurostar trains in England cannot match speeds in France.

□ Is it certain to be completed?

There is a small but genuine risk that the whole £3 billion project, which is being carried out as a joint venture between the public and private sectors, could collapse. The Government is handing over a £1.4 billion cash subsidy and a huge portfolio of publicly owned assets as a "downy" to London & Continental Railways (L&CR), the consortium selected to build the link. However, under its agreement with the Government, L&CR will not receive a penny of subsidy until the line is at least two-thirds built. That delay is to protect the taxpayer if L&CR fails half way through.

□ Is L&CR getting "the mother of all sweeteners" to build it as Labour claims?

As well as £1.4 billion cash, the consortium will be given St Pancras and Waterloo International stations, the Grade I listed St Pancras chambers, 120 acres of disused railway land north of King's Cross, 120 acres of land at the site of the proposed Stratford International station, 600 properties along the route of the link, 31 Eurostar trains, two Eurostar depots, and a 999-year concession to operate Eurostar services. Labour claims the total package of "sweeteners" is worth £5.7 billion, largely due to the development potential of the property. However, L&CR argues that it could not realise the assets because most are worthless except as part of a railway and because Eurostar is losing £200 million a year. L&CR is also limited in the

profits and income it can earn from the property under the terms of its agreement with the Government.

□ Would a Labour Government scrap the deal? Highly unlikely. For all its protest, Labour is as much in favour of the link as the Government. Renegotiating the contract with L&CR could mean many more years of delay in getting it built. A £1.6 billion private-sector contribution is considerably better than none.

□ How will L&CR finance its bid?

In total, the consortium needs to find £2 billion. The initial phase, before work on constructing the link starts late next year, will be funded by a £150 million mixture of bank debt and financial contributions from L&CR's eight shareholders. The later construction phase will be financed through a £1 billion public share issue on the stock market, more bank borrowings and cashflow from a — by then, it is hoped — profitable Eurostar. The link is expected to be open in 2003.

□ Why is Eurostar losing so much money?

The train service, though widely admired, has not proved as popular as the Government hoped. Only three million passengers used it last year, about half the forecast. The Brussels service still operates only a third full and is heavily loss-making, although Paris is performing well. It is also being hit by heavy charges by Railtrack every time a Eurostar train is late.

□ How will L&CR turn round Eurostar?

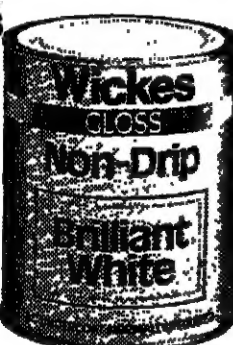
The consortium is pinning its hopes on better marketing, lower fares, improved ticket distribution and a jazzed-up on-board service to attract more passengers. Eurostar will be, in effect, relaunched when L&CR takes over in April.

□ Why is Richard Branson so enthusiastic about L&CR?

Mr Branson's Virgin Group has been frustrated in its attempts to win landing slots at Heathrow and Gatwick airports for the lucrative Paris and Brussels air routes. Eurostar gives Virgin an earthbound option that he hopes will transform cross-Channel travel in the way that Virgin Atlantic forced British Airways and other airlines to upgrade Atlantic services. He is also negotiating to buy a Belgian airline to link services with the Brussels Eurostar to create a pan-European transport network.

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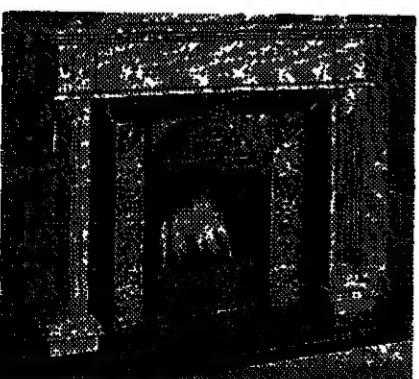
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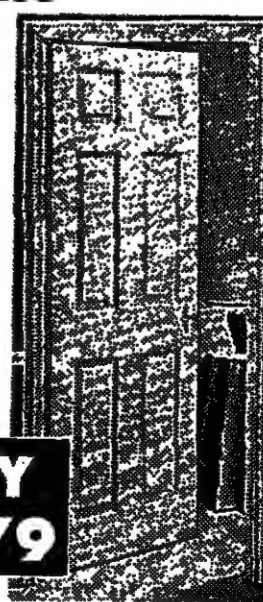


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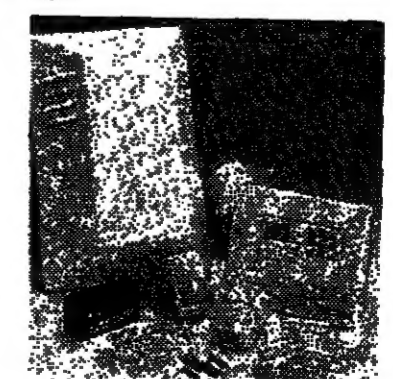
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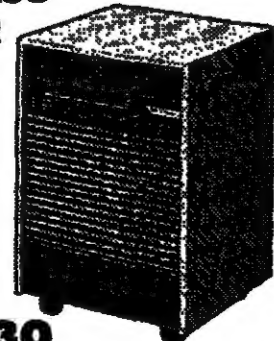
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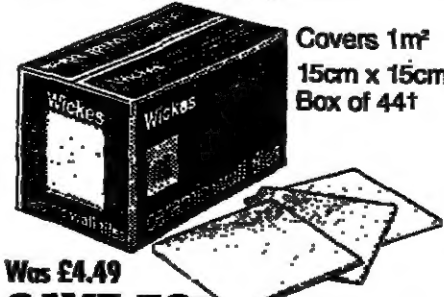


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BUSINESS ACCOUNT

Flagstones 'too cold for comfort'

Bishop puts his foot down over cathedral floor

BY RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

THE Bishop of Chester, fed up with stumbling over the old, uneven flagstones of his cathedral, has dismayed conservationists by insisting the floor be replaced.

The Right Rev Michael Baughen says the late 18th-century floor of the aisle is dangerous and he fears the cathedral could be sued if someone were injured.

He also wants underfloor heating to be installed, arguing that he can no longer bear to watch musicians turn blue while they entertain equally cold congregations.

Conservationists, however, are eager to protect the red sandstone flagstones which are admired by worshippers for their ancient, mellow appearance.

Bishop Baughen said his last wish before his retirement was to have his dream of a new floor fulfilled. "I want to get warm. It really is intolerably difficult. The only way to get heat into the cathedral is to lift the floor and put underfloor heating in."

"The cathedral is renowned. Everyone knows that when you go there for a concert or

big event, you put on about 16 layers of clothing and still sit there with the cold coming up through your feet. At the annual NSPCC children's event, everybody endures it rather than being able to relax."

The cathedral does have a Victorian heating system, but the five free-standing heaters have to be turned off during services and performances because they are noisy.

"The floor is impossible to walk down with any dignity at all," the bishop added. "You have to look down all the time and pick your way across the stones. If it was a public building it would have been closed down as dangerous by the health and safety authorities."

"People have twisted their ankles. I have stumbled. I'm surprised the cathedral has not been sued already. It is extremely serious. A properly laid floor would look magnificent."

The cathedral, a former Benedictine abbey founded in the 11th century, has launched its second appeal in 25 years, for £2.55 million, to fund

restoration of the floor and other areas. Nearly £1 million has been raised and the cathedral authorities are awaiting permission to start work on the floor, beginning with archaeological excavations.

Dominic Lockett, northern officer of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, has sent a protest letter to England's Cathedral Fabric Commission, which is examining the preliminary proposals. He claims a new floor would ruin the building's character.

"It would look out of place in such an old cathedral. It is a beautifully worn floor. We believe repairs to the broken flags could easily solve the problem," he said.

David Burrows, cathedral administrator, said: "We have problems with people tripping and some have hurt themselves. We are frightened there might be a serious accident. A new floor may look a bit out of place until it is worn a little, but we have to think of safety first."

At Your Service, Weekend, page 3



Royal post: Canon Marion Mings, 43, above, a residentiary canon of St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds, has become the first woman in the Church of England to be appointed a chaplain to the Queen. The ceremonial post, the personal gift of the Queen, will allow Canon Mings, originally from Tyneside, to preach once a year in the Chapel Royal, St James's Palace

The importance of finding time alone with yourself

Credo

THE frenzied pace of modern life, with its onslaught of choices and pressures, paralyses many of us with a fear of silence and solitude. Our daily dependence upon noise and ceaseless activity is perhaps why, for many people, the current season of Lent elicits puzzled reactions.

Eleven days into Lent, the 40 days which mark Jesus's testing in the wilderness, I wonder if we have the courage to make space to face the deeper questions in our own lives. In recent years I have visited Israel on retreat. I return each time sadder than ever that the busier I become the greater is my need for inner resources from God who, as the psalmist says, "restores my soul".

The barren wilderness of the Judean desert was for Jesus no weekend break. He wrestled with eternal truths, affirming his own identity with the statement "man shall not live by bread alone". We instinctively agree with these words. We know that we are more than the sum total of our genetic make-up. But our longing for greater wisdom and spirituality is stamped by the materialist rush.

How can we make time this Lent for silence and solitude? Perhaps by turning off the television for a few evenings, or fighting the temptation to switch on the radio during a car journey. It is so important



Clive Calver

to create time for standing back and taking stock of our lives as Jesus did. Even when others clamoured for his attention, he knew the significance of being alone. "At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. The place where they came to keep him when leaving them." (Luke IV, 42).

Entering "a wilderness" of our own can be transforming. It can also be painful. We may have to face tough issues such as bereavement, failure, broken relationships and insecurity. This Lent we may need to

repent over past actions towards others, or adopt humility in current relationships. What ultimately matters, however, is what we do with these experiences. The promise of Jesus is that he walks along the difficult road with us. For it is not suffering that destroys people, it is suffering without meaning. Even positive questions like "why is there beauty in the world?" could become a scourge from which we gain no quick release. And yet Lent promises that the wilderness is not for ever.

If we can overcome our aversion to quietness and our uneasiness with being alone, we will discover that letting go of human securities in order to wrestle and search, will liberate us to discover more of our real identity and purposes. With the triumph of the Resurrection already on the horizon, God himself promises "I will not forget you. See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands." (Is 49, 16).

□ The Rev Clive Calver is the Director-General of the Evangelical Alliance UK.

Church praises band of lay volunteers

AT LEAST six out of ten services in the Methodist church are conducted by local preachers and not ordained ministers, the church said yesterday. The church, which later this year celebrates the bicentenary of the creation of local preachers in 1796, yesterday praised its "band of dedicated and unpaid volunteers", which dates from the time of

John Wesley and the beginnings of Methodism.

The Methodist church now has 12,612 local preachers — lay church members who volunteer to be trained as preachers — as well as the 3,459 ordained ministers. Women have been able to be local preachers for two centuries, although they could not be ordained as ministers until 1974.

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Threat of summit clash over East Timor averted as two continents build economic bridges

Europe sidesteps rights issue to bolster Asia trade

FROM PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR, IN BANGKOK

EUROPEAN Union leaders were last night moving away from a confrontation over human rights in an attempt to ensure that the first Asia-Europe summit meeting here ends in success.

John Major and other senior European leaders did not join efforts to strengthen the summit statement drafted by Thailand. They did not wish to prejudice their hopes of building new economic and strategic relationships between the two regions.

Fears of a walkout by President Suharto of Indonesia, if Portugal raised the vexed issue of conditions in Lisbon's former colony of East Timor, prompted the first meeting of leaders of the two countries since 1975, and avoided a clash that would have soured the historic gathering. Antonio

Guterres, the Portuguese Prime Minister, approached Mr Suharto at dinner on Thursday night and offered to establish indirect diplomatic ties in return for the release of an East Timor rebel leader. Mr Suharto promised to think about it.

The desire for amity was expressed by Jacques Santer, the European Commission President, who declared that European leaders had come seeking co-operation rather than confrontation. "Although we come from different traditions, we are all attached to the universal values which belong to all humanity," he said in an opening address.

Lamberto Dini, the acting Prime Minister of Italy, which currently holds the six-month EU presidency, was slightly more direct, suggesting that

both Asia and Europe were accountable to rules of the United Nations.

But the Asian countries had made clear in advance their reluctance to accept interference from Europe in their affairs. In his opening address, Banharn Silpa-archa, the Thai Prime Minister, noted that both Asia and Europe had taken "quite different development paths with standards and cultural values suited to their own circumstances".

Li Peng, the Chinese Prime Minister, said in a meeting with Mr Banharn that the EU countries "might try to impose a European way of thought on Asia. Thai officials said Mr Banharn shared Mr Li's view because Thailand regarded the summit as "one between equal partners with no imposi-

tion of one side's views on the other".

Last night, the Europeans appeared to have dropped any serious attempt to beef up the Thai statement which declares that the two regions will conduct their affairs "on the basis of non-interference in

each other's internal affairs". Some had originally backed attempts to require the signatory countries to accept "internationally agreed principles and obligations".

British sources said Mr Major could live with the Thai wording because the state-

ment also recognised the UN convention on human rights, which would allow Britain and other countries to raise issues of concern with offending countries.

In his opening speech to the summit yesterday, Mr Major stepped up his calls for reform

of the UN, saying that it had to be put on a firm financial footing and that penalties on non-paying countries had to be tightened.

But as they tipped round issues such as Asian labour standards and abuses of workers' rights, the emphasis from

both continents was on building a new business relationship between Europe, the oldest economic powerhouse, and East Asia, the newest.

A second Asia-Europe summit will be held in London in 1998 and South Korea has offered to host a third in 2000.



Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, with Ryutaro Hashimoto, Japan's Prime Minister, left, and Li Peng of China at the start of the summit yesterday

Court removes Rao as head of political bribes investigation

BY CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN DELHI AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

THE Indian supreme court yesterday removed control of a federal agency investigating a political bribery scandal from P.V. Narasimha Rao, the Prime Minister.

The court, which criticised the Central Bureau of Investigation in January for dragging its heels over the corruption allegations, has emerged as the leading champion of clean government in a country accustomed to corruption at every level.

Yesterday's ruling gave the CBI absolute freedom to pursue its hunt for politicians involved in the scandal. Before, the agency was seen as a tool of the Prime Minister's Office, and there are indications that it had pursued its investigations selectively.

Meanwhile, the court ordered the imprisonment pending trial of ten senior politicians who allegedly took bribes. Although assured of bail, the public humiliation of so many powerful politicians has ensured that corruption will be a central issue in the general election in April or May. The men are accused of taking bribes from a millionaire businessman five or six years ago in return for favours.

They include L.K. Advani, 67, leader of the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party, and Devi Lal, an elderly former Deputy Prime Minister, as well as several ministers forced to resign in recent weeks. They are among 115 politicians and bureaucrats said to have taken money from Surendra Kumar Jain, who allegedly paid 650 million rupees (£21 million at 1991 exchange rates) in bribes.

The principal evidence is a diary kept by Mr Jain, containing the names or initials of people who supposedly took money from him and members of his family. The affair is known as the *hawala* scandal, after the word describing illegal foreign exchange transactions.

Mr Jain is said to have been one of the country's principal money-launderers and the CBI is examining whether he and his family handled vast amounts of cash for Muslim guerrillas fighting a separatist war in Kashmir.

Opposition leaders have accused Mr Rao of taking huge bribes. Even if, as expected, the CBI says the allegations are baseless, suspicions of corruption at the highest level of government will remain.

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'Honest John' poised to end Labor's 13-year reign in Australia

Poll signals defeat for Keating

BY ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

AUSTRALIANS have turned on Paul Keating, their Prime Minister, and are poised to shun Labor in today's general election, ending the party's 13-year hold on power.

A poll published in the national daily, *The Australian*, showed Labor trailing by seven points, a deficit that would translate into a loss of 23 seats in the House of Representatives. Such an outcome would be a severe personal defeat for Mr Keating and a blow to his hopes of cutting ties with the monarchy and declaring a republic by 2000.

The *Australian* poll, by the Newpoll group, gave Labor only 40.5 per cent of the primary vote, with the Liberal-National Party coalition re-

ceiving 48 per cent. Under the preferential voting system, this would deliver John Howard's team a landslide victory with 53.5 per cent of the vote after preferences are distributed.

Pollsters say voters have deserted Labor in its heartland of New South Wales, where 13 seats are in doubt. The anti-Labor mood is similar in Queensland, where Labor could lose another eight seats.

"Honest John" Howard, 56, unloved but respected, fought a dour campaign for the Liberals in which he condemned Labor's handling of the economy and promised to curb the trade unionism which he says is stifling business.

Addressing a Canberra rally billed as Labor's call to arms, Mr Keating said: "We did more over each month of those three years than most coalition governments did in a term."

Australia needed a philosophy, a belief and a passion, Mr Keating said.

With characteristic caution, Mr Howard warned his followers not to be euphoric too early, and referred to an earlier opinion poll by the Roy Morgan company, which had the rivals sharing first place.

"This is tight," he said. "We have a volatile electorate, there are still many people who don't make up their minds until they enter the booths. I take nothing for granted."

However, Bob Hawke, the

former Prime Minister and most successful of Labor leaders, was braced for defeat. "My heart says I hope Labor can win. My mind says there will be a change of government," said Mr Hawke, who was ousted by Mr Keating in a 1991 party coup.

Labor Party strategists fear they are trailing in key marginal seats. Even a modest swing against Keating would extinguish the political careers of some of Labor's brightest young talents.

Those who may be heading for the political wilderness include: Michael Lavarch, the Attorney-General, who only six months ago was being hailed as a future Prime Minister; Gary Johns, the Special Minister of State, and

Robert Tickner, the Aboriginal Affairs Minister.

Today's vote covers not only the House of Representatives, but half the Senate. Voters will be confronted by a ballot paper up to 3ft long to accommodate the extraordinary number of individuals standing for election.

In New South Wales, for example, six Senate seats are being contested by 63 candidates. These in turn are split into 18 different groups and cover such diverse interests as The Reclaim Australia Group, the No Airport Noise movement and the Call to Australia party.

Even if he is victorious, Mr Howard faces a baptism of fire. Trade unions, sensing a conservative victory, have promised industrial "war" in support of new wage claims. Moreover, Labor could also frustrate a new government by siding with the left-wing Australian Democrats and Greens, who will probably hold the balance of power in the Senate.

Labor's campaign suffered another body blow on the eve of the election when the influential Business Council of Australia disputed a claim by Mr Keating that living standards had risen 1 per cent since Labor came to office. The council retorted that standards had, in fact, fallen by 13 per cent since 1981.

A Keating defeat would signal the end of one of the most dynamic yet controversial eras in Australian politics.

Under Mr Hawke's leadership, Labor established an accord with the trade unions, which kept a lid on wage demands and reduced strikes. With Mr Keating as Treasurer, Labor had a formidable duo in charge, guiding Australia through some of its most radical economic reforms, including the floating of the dollar and the deregulation of financial markets.

Voting is compulsory. At the last election nearly 500,000 of registered voters failed to do their democratic duty, and 20,000 were fined the equivalent of £12 each.

Capitalist given star treatment in Peking

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN PEKING

CHINESE Communist Party officials joined astronomers and scientists last night to fête a businessman who was the first to own a Ferrari in China. At the gala occasion, an asteroid discovered during the heyday of Mao Tse-tung was named after Li Xiaohua.

Mr Li's recognition was in contrast to the practice in Mao's days, when peasants were regarded as the most honoured workers. There was no place for industrialists in the planned economy.

As Mr Li accepted the accolades at a five-star hotel in Peking, the People's Liberation Army sang patriotic songs such as *China's Star*. Rock singers also entertained the gathering.

The asteroid was discovered in 1964 by the Purple Mountain Observatory in Nanking. Last night, it was renamed "Li Xiaohua planet" in recognition of the philanthropist's "contributions to education, science and technology".

Mr Li, whose company markets a "cure" for baldness, had until now been famous for paying £80,000 in 1993 to buy the first red Ferrari in China. His customised number plate is A00001.

Besides selling hair tonic, the 45-year-old entrepreneur, described by one Hong Kong magazine as the second-richest man in China, has interests in property, food processing, electrical appliances, plastics, tourism and entertainment. He is a success story in a new China that espouses ailing leader Deng Xiaoping's dictum "to get rich is glorious".

At the China World Hotel last night, Mr Li said: "My family was very poor and I didn't have the amount of toys children have these days, but it was a joy to count the number of stars in the Milky Way."

This was an honour for Chinese all over the world, he said. His nomination was approved by the International Astronomical Union in America.



Noa Ben-Artzi, granddaughter of the assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, lights a candle on his tomb at Mount Herzl cemetery yesterday

Israel rejects offer of Hamas ceasefire

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

ISRAEL yesterday rejected a conditional offer of a ceasefire made by the leadership of Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, which earlier this week killed 26 people and wounded more than 100 in three terrorist attacks.

In the offer, Hamas demanded the release of all its prisoners in Israeli jails and "an end to Israeli aggression against Palestinian civilians on conquered lands".

The speed of the Israeli Cabinet's rejection of the deal, which included a temporary halt to suicide attacks until next Friday, was seen as likely to herald more violence.

One result of the attacks so far has been to reduce the lead of Shimon Peres, the Prime Minister, in the opinion polls so that he is now running level with Benjamin Netanyahu, the right-wing challenger who has pledged to freeze large sections of the 1993 peace deal with the Palestinians if he wins the general election on May 29.

Hamas threatened to resume military action if Israel failed to respond to the proposal after a week.

THE PARTIES



PAUL JOHN KEATING, 51
Australian Labor Party

POLICY: A "true believer" of the Labor philosophy. He toppled Bob Hawke, under whom he served as Finance Minister, in a backroom coup in 1991 to become Prime Minister. Made strides in achieving reconciliation with Aborigines.

ECONOMY: He deregulated financial markets, floated the dollar and turned Australia into a bustling Pacific Rim economy. Has kept a low-tax regime but underlying balance of payments deficit is up. At least 8 per cent are unemployed.

MONARCHY: Of Irish descent, the Prime Minister has an abhorrence of the monarchy. He wants to ditch the Queen as the Head of State. Dreams of a republic by the year 2000, and has campaigned strongly to bring this vision into reality.

THE ISSUES



JOHN WINSTON HOWARD, 56
Liberal Party

POLICY: "Honest" John Winston (named after Churchill) Howard is uncharismatic but trustworthy. Unkindly depicted by cartoonists as a quacking duck or hairy monkey. Pledges to take on the unions with Thatcher-style reforms.

ECONOMY: The Leader of the Opposition is staunchly pro-business, especially favouring small business. He proposes tax rebates for families. Also wants a "safety net" minimum-wage scale for Australian blue-collar workers.

MONARCHY: Mr Howard will slow down the process towards a republic by proposing a long (read tedious) people's convention. This will be made up of politicians and eminent citizens who will be asked to investigate the options.

THE POLL



TIM ANDREW FISCHER, 50
National Party

POLICY: Mr Fischer is in coalition with the Liberals. If they win, he becomes Deputy Prime Minister. The old Country Party is big in the outback. Nearly quit politics after a car crash, but returned to Canberra to be Mr Howard's right hand.

ECONOMY: His chief responsibility is foreign trade, which is crucial to Australia's future. Also responsible for mines and energy. Admired by his opponents, but will be tough in one and wool trade deals with big players like the Japanese?

MONARCHY: *God Save the Queen* is the slogan in the outback. Support for the monarchy is staunchest among National Party electorates, especially Queensland. The Nationals also resist moves to rid the Australian flag of the Union Jack.

John Howard's Liberal/National coalition will face a rocky road even if it wins an outright majority in the House of Representatives, because the Australian

Democrats and the Greens will hold the balance of power in the Senate. Labor could entice them to block initiatives proposed by Mr Howard and Mr Fischer.




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the fracas at the
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A designer
who works
to death



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THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

SATURDAY MARCH 2 1996

Factories standstill fuels case for further rate cut

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH manufacturing industry has stagnated for six months, putting pressure on jobs and prices and shortening the odds on another interest rate cut next week.

Manufacturing activity contracted fractionally last month and prices slumped to their lowest level for four years, according to the latest survey from the Chartered Institute of Purchasing & Supply, based on questionnaires sent to purchasing executives in 310 industrial companies.

The overall Purchasing Managers' Index fell to 49.8 per cent in February, from 50.3 per cent in January. A reading below 50 per cent signals a contraction in manufacturing activity. With demand generally weak, the prices index fell sharply, to 44.4 per cent, its lowest level

since January 1992 and down from 49.1 per cent in January this year. This was the fourth successive month in which prices fell. Last month, more than a quarter of managers surveyed reported lower prices than a month earlier.

The employment index fell below the crucial 50 per cent level for the second month running, a sign that companies are shedding labour to cope with lower demand, and therefore output.

The chartered institute noted that February was the sixth successive month without any significant growth in manufacturing. Peter Thomson, its director-general, said that the sector is a hotchpotch of different conditions - firms producing goods for consumer markets are buoyant but manufacturers of capital equip-

ment, such as plant and machinery, are stagnant, he said. Yesterday's purchasing managers' survey, the first key snapshot of the month, has added to the City's conviction that base rates will be cut, with many economists betting on a 1.4-point move after next Thursday's monetary meeting between Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, and Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England.

Adam Cole, UK economist at James Capel, promptly revised his forecast for growth this year down to 2 per cent, against the Treasury's forecast of 3 per cent. He said that growth in the first half of this year will be well below the economy's sustainable rate of growth and that inflation and base rates have much further to fall. "If Mr Clarke moves

quickly he will meet little Bank of England resistance in cutting rates as low as 5 per cent," he said.

Don Smith, UK economist at HSBC Markets, said that the purchasing managers' survey had been more accurate than any other in predicting conditions in manufacturing industry. The drop in prices points to another fall in producer input prices this month - an indicator keenly watched by the Bank of England - and the survey in total "clearly strengthens the case for an imminent rate cut", he said.

British Government bonds soared yesterday on strengthening hopes of a rate cut here and abroad. The US National Purchasing Managers' Index published yesterday showed a disappointing bounce back from January when business

was hit by winter blizzards, and the figures were taken on Wall Street as a sign that US rates may be cut again. In addition, the Tankan survey on the Japanese economy was weak enough to allay fears that Japanese interest rates may be on the way up.

A combination of apparently low inflation and sluggish growth in Britain, coupled with the prospect of rate cuts here and abroad, sent gilt futures prices soaring by 1 1/2 points. Short sterling futures on the Liffe market rallied sharply, too, and are now pricing in another 1.4-point cut in base rates.

City economists said that a rate cut next week is now such a foregone conclusion that it would be an opportunity missed if the authorities opted to keep rates unchanged.

'Modest recovery' in homes market

By KAREN ZAGOR

THERE was more evidence of a fragile recovery in the housing market yesterday when the Nationwide Building Society reported a 0.9 per cent rise in its seasonally adjusted house price index in the year to February.

Nationwide said the rise was consistent with a modest recovery in the market. Paul Sanderson, head of research, said: "Prices seem to have bottomed out since last autumn and there has been a modest upward trend since."

This was borne out by news that TSB Bank's Affordability Index has reached its lowest level since 1978. TSB estimates that a typical buyer this year will spend £25.70 on mortgage payments out of every £100 in take-home pay, compared with £30 last year.

The Nationwide report, in isolation, was not particularly encouraging. The average house price in February was £51,256, an improvement on every month since August but below last year's peak of £52,180 in May.

The society, like most lenders, has been discounting mortgage rates and offering cash incentives to encourage people to buy. Michael Foot, head of banking supervision at the Bank of England, has told banks and building societies that thinner margins for personal mortgages may sow the seeds for trouble in the future.

The Bank of England said: "Lenders must take into account that somewhere along the line some people might not be able to repay their loans and they do need to bear this in mind when pricing products."

Another concern is that the surfeit of cashback and discount schemes may encourage too many people to take out unrealistic loans. The cash component can be substantial. Newcastle Building Society's 6 per cent rebate will pay up to £15,000, while Chelsea Building Society is offering a 5 per cent rebate, with a cap of £10,000.

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MFI to invest £60m on store designs

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

MFI, mass-producer of flat-pack furniture, is to spend £60 million over the next few years upgrading its network of stores to extend their appeal.

The move follows the success of a new store design called HomeWorks which has been tested at several outlets and involves rearranging displays to give them a more spacious feel.

John Randall, managing director, said existing stores felt too "enclosed" and the redesign was based on two-and-a-half years of research.

Sales in France between November and February in-

creased 26 per cent on the previous year, and rose 50 per cent during the winter sale. UK retail sales between November and the end of February were up 2 per cent on the previous year, in spite of trading conditions described by Mr Randall as "very difficult".

Group sales for the second half of the year to February 28 were 5.5 per cent higher than for the same period in 1994-95, he added.

In recent years, the company has been attempting to lay to rest the image of its products as poorly-fitting and downmarket, and putting more emphasis on bedrooms and kitchens.

Originally known as the family firm Mullard Furniture Industries, MFI was floated in 1992 at 115p per share.

The HomeWorks concept appears to be paying off: those stores that have been converted already reported sales 12 per cent ahead of the rest of the chain during MFI's winter sale period in January and February this year.

The group will publish its full-year results in the first week of July. NatWest Securities said yesterday that it would not be upgrading its 1996 pre-tax profit forecast of £60 million.

The company's share price gained 6p, to 158p, on yesterday's news.



John Randall said displays would be arranged to give stores a more spacious feel

Young close to £2.4m payoff

By MARTIN WALLER and JON ASHWORTH

LORD YOUNG of Grafton, the former Cabinet minister who was ousted in November as chairman of Cable and Wireless, is close to agreeing a £2.4 million payoff.

The balance of the money will come from share options, and the deal is along the lines of that agreed with James Ross, the former chief executive, last week.

No formal statement has been made over a settlement, and a C&W spokesman said: "The position we're in is the same as it was ten days ago."

But Lord Young is expected shortly to accept the deal offered by his former employer. This would pay him just short of £120,000, or three months' salary, in compensation and other benefits worth another £45,000. He would be entitled to bonuses for the

portion of the current financial year he has served worth another £200,000. His outstanding share options are worth another £2 million at today's prices.

Mr Ross agreed a payoff of almost £1.3 million, £1 million of which came from his executive share options.

Lord Young, who had no formal contract with the company, was unavailable for comment last night. He is thought to be planning to use his settlement to set up his own small merchant bank.

Meanwhile, Michael Lawrence, former chief executive of the London Stock Exchange, will receive less than £400,000 in compensation for loss of office, under the terms of an agreement hammered out yesterday. Mr Lawrence was dismissed from the £240,000-a-year post in January.

Lloyds Chemists bids referred

By GEORGE SIVELL

THE Department of Trade yesterday referred the UniChem bid for Lloyds Chemists to the Monopolies Commission and sought permission from Brussels to investigate the rival bid from Gehe, the German pharmaceutical group. The announcements knocked 17p off Lloyds's shares to 465p.

John Taylor, Competition and Consumer Affairs Minister, said the UniChem bid was being referred because of "competition concerns in the wholesale and retail pharmaceutical markets".

Boots is currently market leader with 1,200 UK chemists' shops out of a total

market of about 10,000. A victory by UniChem would give it 1,300 shops after adding in Lloyds's 924 outlets. Gehe has about 300 UK shops after acquiring AAF last year.

UniChem believed its bid attempt was hamstrung by the MMC referral but analysts said the decision to ask Brussels for a British examination of the bid indicated competition concerns at the possibility of a Gehe takeover.

Analysts said UniChem would have to make disposals in order to be allowed to take over Lloyds, a possibility hinted at in its offer document. The City believes the OFT is concerned more at erosion between wholesale and retail sides of pharmaceuticals rather than a straightforward retail monopoly.

Tempus, page 30

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET

FT-SE 100	3782.7	(+25.1)
Yield	3.91%	
FT-SE All share	1822.03	(+11.28)
Nikkei	20168.03	(+43.28)
New York	5804.41	(+18.79)
Dow Jones	841.44	(+1.01)
S&P Composite		

US RATE

Federal Funds	5 1/8%	(5 1/8%)
Long Bond	9 1/8%	(9 1/8%)
Yield	6.40%	(6.47%)

LONDON MONEY

3-mth Interbank	6 1/8%	(6 1/8%)
Life long gilts		
Future (Mar)	107 1/8%	(106 1/8%)

STERLING

New York	1.5275*	(1.5321)
London	1.5275	(1.5329)
DM	2.2571	(2.2522)
FF	7.7405	(7.7210)
SFR	1.5389	(1.5341)
Yen	161.28	(161.05)
£ Index	83.6	(83.5)

\$\$\$ DOLLAR

DM	1.4784*	(1.4728)
FF	5.0880*	(5.0488)
SFR	1.0567*	(1.0513)
Yen	95.6	(95.4)

Tokyo close Yen 105.55

NORTH SEA OIL

Brant 15-day (May)	\$16.90	(\$17.08)
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GOLD

London close	\$388.65	(\$400.38)
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* denotes midday trading price

Memory loss

Shares in Memory Corporation plunged after the group reported a 1995 loss increased to £1.95 million from £1 million and said that 1996 revenues would be affected by a significant fall in the price of Memory products. Page 28, Tempus 30

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The killing of Michael Lawrence

The killing on January 4 of Michael Lawrence, former chief executive of the London Stock Exchange, was inevitably going to lead to an inquest. The inevitable grinds on and Sir Tom Arnold, the Tory chairman of the Treasury Select Committee, has enthusiastically donned the mantle of coroner.

It was originally thought that the Select Committee's perusal of the Stock Exchange's future role, along with the abrupt exit of Mr Lawrence, might have drawn to a close by now. Not so. Sir Tom and his colleagues are clearly warming to their task. John Kemp-Welch, chairman and now acting chief executive of the Stock Exchange, has already proved the subject of one grilling and appears destined to enjoy another. Diane Abbott (Labour), it may be recalled, put it to Mr Kemp-Welch that the Stock Exchange was run more "like a club than a business". Quentin Davies (Conservative) ventured that the Exchange was "undergoing something of an identity crisis". Mr Kemp-Welch

politely rejected such allegations and was left to play his highest card by way of the revelation that the Stock Exchange has decided to conduct its own inquiry into the way it runs itself. Ian Plenderleith and Ian Salter, the Stock Exchange's deputy chairmen, are to sound out members on issues such as consultancy procedures and report within three months.

Mr Lawrence's written submission to the committee makes interesting reading, not least his version of the organisation he inherited two years ago. Permit me to précis a few bullet points.

□ The full-time management team had no formal status in that there were no delegated powers to them as a group, and no formal minutes of management meetings went to the board.

□ Most of the formal decision taking was under the control of practitioner committees, many of which (but not all) were chaired by non-executives.

□ The upward accountability of the chair in these committees was orally

to the board where the chair was a board member, or not at all.

Equally interesting is Lawrence's recommendation that the Stock Exchange should publish, whenever possible, the results of its investigations into controversial share price movements. As Mr Lawrence puts it: "The Exchange is usually in a position to have views as to whether there is a *prima facie* case for a full investigation by the DTI or other appropriate body..." He adds, convincingly, that the market's reputation would be enhanced "if more openness was achieved".

In his verbal evidence to the committee on Wednesday, Mr Lawrence made it abundantly clear that he believed his demise was the result of a coup inspired by the City's major market-making firms, opposed to his plans to introduce an electronic "order matching" system of share trading. The Big Five rebels have long been perceived as BZW, Smith New Court, now absorbed by Merrill Lynch, Kleinwort Benson, SBC Warburg and UBS. In evidence, Mr Lawrence specifically



MELVYN MARCKUS

named BZW, Smith New Court and SBC Warburg as major opponents of the reforms which threaten London's traditional "quote driven" style of trading.

In his submission, Mr Lawrence states: "As far as I am concerned, the reform programme I led had the support of the chairman of the exchange and of the board. As late as November 1995, the chairman assured me of his support for the

trading reforms, and the board, despite lobbying, fully supported the proposals. I received no warning at any time that I did not enjoy their support although we were all aware of the opposition of certain market-makers." Asked if he would have retained his post if Mr Kemp-Welch had stood by him, Mr Lawrence retorted that he was "certain" this would have been so.

Mr Kemp-Welch has already been briefly quizzed on this matter. Q: In the evidence we have received from Mr Lawrence he makes the point that he received no warning at any time that he did not enjoy the board's support. Does this surprise you or not?

Kemp-Welch: "I think Mr Lawrence was well aware of the concerns that lay amongst our membership and our constituents and I really have nothing further to add than that."

Not that the perspective of Mark Potashnick, of Kleinwort Benson, should go unrecorded.

Potashnick: "... It was a very good example of how we, as a membership, particularly at

Kleinwort Benson, were losing confidence in the organisation which we felt should be representing us to a greater degree through this debate. So I think it was the sense we were not in control, although we were not looking to control the situation entirely ourselves. We felt that no one was in control other than the Stock Exchange and the Stock Exchange would be dictating to the whole marketplace what was going to happen to the whole market."

The reality, as I reported in this column on January 6, is that an ultimatum was delivered to Mr Kemp-Welch by a delegation drawn from the Stock Exchange's senior appointments and remuneration committees shortly before Christmas. Committee members include Donald Brydon, deputy chief executive of BZW, Michael Marks, deputy chairman of Merrill Lynch International, and Nick Versey, of SBC Warburg. Other members include John Bond, chief executive of HSBC Holdings, and Mr Salter, of SGST Investment Advisers.

More grist for Sir Tom and his colleagues who are clearly considering whether to recommend that the Office of Fair Trading (a body that seldom requires much encouragement) should take a closer look at the Tower's affairs. Stand by, word has it, for evidence from the Treasury, reputed to be exceedingly well informed about the order matching/quote driven power-play.

Lawrence, incidentally, reached a compensation settlement of upwards of £300,000 with the Tower on Thursday.

The message from Sir Nicholas Redmayne, Kleinwort Benson's chief executive, was: "In our mind it is vital that the Stock Exchange gets the right sort of chap as the next chief executive and that chap has got to be, amongst other things, a diplomat, intelligent and a business man."

Was he implying that Mr Lawrence was not either or all of these? Sir Nicholas replied: "I am certainly implying that Mr Lawrence was not a diplomat, but a man cannot be everything. I realise that."

Hanson bids for stake in gas war

By Christine Buckley

HANSON's energy division marked its entry into south-west England's competitive market — which will begin on April 29 — with a buy-now, pay-later offer.

Eastern Natural Gas, part of Eastern Electricity, the generating and distribution business owned by the soon-to-demerge Hanson Group, has offered to undercut British Gas tariffs by 20 per cent to 500,000 households in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset taking part in the experiment. Meanwhile, Swab Gas — the operation whose now-abandoned marketing campaign has come under fire from the Gas Consumers Council and is being investigated by Devon County Council — moved to appease its critics. Derek Lickorish, director of consumer service at the electricity parent Swab, said yesterday that it had had productive meetings with the consumers council.

British Gas, which is expected to lose a large chunk of its market share, has still to announce a pricing strategy for the area. The company is allowed to offer differential rates to customers in the South West and those in the rest of the country, but there is speculation that the company cannot afford to implement significant price cuts.

Memory suffers larger loss

By Martin Barrow

MORE than £63 million was wiped from the stock market value of Memory Corporation after a warning that revenues would be hit by a sharp fall in prices for its computer memory products.

The biggest company on the Alternative Investment Market (AIM), Memory's stock market capitalisation peaked at £352 million, even though it has never made a profit and its 1995 sales were just £450,000. Its shares were backed heavily by private investors after its flotation in September last year.

But the shares have fallen sharply from a peak price of 595p amid growing concern about the company's ability to generate profits from its innovative computer memory technologies.

Yesterday, the share price plunged by 107p, to 225p, after the disclosure that the 1995 loss had increased to £1.95 million, from £1 million, and that 1996 revenues would be adversely affected by a significant fall in the price of memory products.

The downturn coincides with a crucial period in Mem-

ory's brief existence, when the company makes the transition from research and development to product development and manufacture.

Cameron McCall, the chief executive, said that having remained at relatively high and stable levels during most of 1995, prices began to fall in the final quarter and the downturn has gathered pace in the current year.

"It is still not possible to predict with any degree of certainty at this time whether the current market situation will continue through 1996," he said. The latest losses include a £267,000 writedown of stock acquired in 1995, to take into account the depressed market.

Memory Corp raised £5 million when it joined the Alternative Investment Market last year via a share placing to help to fund the development of its technology. Alliances with both BTG and Sumitomo fuelled City enthusiasm for the shares. The company ended 1995 with £5.7 million in cash.

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Go-Ahead's Martin Ballinger, right, managing director, and Chris Moyes, commercial director

Hotel groups raise hopes for Belfast

By Ross Tleman, Industrial Correspondent

TWO hotels are to be built in Belfast, creating 230 jobs and raising hopes that last year's upsurge in economic development in Northern Ireland will continue, in spite of the renewed IRA bombing campaign in mainland Britain.

Jurys Hotel Group, based in Dublin, plans a 190-bedroom hotel, the largest in Northern Ireland, on a site next to Belfast Opera House. The hotel, granted by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, will cost £9.4 million and employ 90 staff.

In a separate announcement, Stakis, the Glasgow hotel and casino group, revealed plans

for a £16.3 million hotel, conference and golf resort at Templepatrick, between the international airport, at Aldergrove, and Belfast.

Backed by a £4.3 million grant from the tourist board, the 130-room hotel and associated facilities are expected to provide up to 150 jobs.

Construction will take place on the Castle Upon Estate. Facilities will include a conference and banqueting centre seating 400 people, three floodlit tennis courts, a golf academy and a 32-room apartment hotel catering for long-stay visitors.

Next stop could be rail for Go-Ahead

By Martin Barrow

GO-AHEAD GROUP, the ambitious bus operator, is ready to join the bidders for local rail franchises.

The Newcastle company, with bus operations in the North East, London, Oxford and Brighton, is looking at areas offering synergies with existing bus services.

Go-Ahead has been in touch with potential rail partners, including management buyout teams, but could launch a lone bid for a rail network in one of its four core regions.

This would follow the lead taken by Stagecoach, a rival bus operator, which now runs

trains in the South West. Reporting a 63 per cent rise in half-year profits to £6.7 million to December 30, Go-Ahead said services in the North East had improved margins through further cost reductions.

Brighton and London enjoyed a better than expected summer and the pre-Christmas period was buoyant. The Oxford business had seen increased competition.

The interim dividend is lifted 16 per cent to 1.85p a share, payable on April 25, out of earnings up to 12.69p a share from 8.2p. The shares rose 10p to 303p.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Bus expansion drives Henlys to £25m

INTENSE competition between Britain's bus and coach operators and substantial expansion has helped Henlys, the motor trading group, to turn in a 57 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £25.3 million for the year to December 31. While profits in its smaller motor division slid on the back of a disappointing new car market, the bus and coach sector moved ahead 69 per cent.

The strength of the coach market was highlighted by the group: registrations increased 45 per cent to more than 1,000 vehicles and registrations in public service vehicles rose 30 per cent. Henlys, which also benefited from modification work required to make coaches more accessible to the disabled, reported a kick-in of £1.3 million from Northern Counties. It acquired Northern, a coach company, last year with a number of other acquisitions. The final dividend, due to be paid on April 10, is 8p. That makes the total 12p, up from 8.5p the previous year.

Tempus, page 30

Specialeyes in profit

SPECIALEYES, the 64-store optician chain, aims to develop further after reporting pre-tax profits of £312,000 before exceptional items for the year to November 25, against losses of £788,000 previously. An exceptional credit of £7.5 million, relating to VAT rebates, came after a change in tax guidelines. Turnover rose to £21.8 million, from £20.4 million, reflecting the new basis of VAT apportionment. A dividend is restored, with a final payment of 0.75p, from earnings per share up to 33.45p, including the VAT credit, from losses of 5.09p.

United's merger support

SHAREHOLDERS in United News & Media yesterday approved the group's proposed £3 billion merger with MAI. United said that it was delighted with the level of support, with 99 per cent of proxy votes received by the company in favour of the move. There was also no opposition to the merger plans in the extraordinary general meeting yesterday, which lasted only a few minutes. The merger now requires the support of shareholders in MAI, the media to finance group, before completion. The closing date for acceptances for MAI is March 5.

Ranger surges to \$20m

HIGHER oil prices and increased production in the North Sea helped Ranger Oil, the Canadian oil exploration company listed in London, to raise earnings from US\$6.1 million to \$19.9 million last year. Included in the result is a gain of \$17 million from the sale of a half share in a drilling rig, partially offset by write-offs of \$14.8 million on unsuccessful exploration in Peru and Namibia. Ranger's oil and gas revenues increased by 26 per cent to \$192 million after a 39 per cent increase in North Sea production.

Bid for Trencherwood

TRENCHERWOOD, the struggling construction company, has succumbed to an agreed bid worth £10.4 million from Wilson Bowden, a rival housebuilder. The offer was 8.87p for each ordinary share. David Dugdale, Trencherwood's chairman, said that refinancing in 1993 had secured the immediate future, but trading conditions had remained difficult and development had been further hindered by high borrowings. Banks have given irrevocable acceptances in respect of 35.2 per cent of Trencherwood's ordinary shares.

THE SUNDAYTIMES

The battle of the forecourts

By merging its European refining and marketing operations with the American giant Mobil, BP has shaken up the oil industry. But it won't end the price war that has been raging on Britain's forecourts...

Business — The Sunday Times tomorrow

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia \$	2.10	1.94
Austria Sch	18.88	15.38
Belgium Fr	49.40	45.10
Canada \$	2.504	2.344
Cyprus Cyp£	0.758	0.688
Denmark Kr	5.34	4.54
Finland Mk	7.94	6.99
France Fr	6.15	5.50
Germany M	2.41	2.20
Greece Dr	361.00	368.00
Hong Kong \$	12.48	11.48
India Rs	1.08	0.94
Israel Sh	6.1500	4.5000
Italy Lit	2487.00	2332.00
Japan Yen	175.90	159.50
Malta	0.562	0.537
Netherlands Gld	2.981	2.451
New Zealand \$	2.42	2.23
Norway Kr	10.42	9.82
Portugal Esc	248.50	227.00
S. Africa Rd	8.10	7.70
Spain Ptas	167.00	164.00
Sweden Kr	10.35	10.15
Switzerland Fr	1.36	1.20
Turkey Lira	1.80	94818.0
USA \$	1.629	1.488

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates set at close of trading yesterday.

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SCOTTISH WIDOWS

هكذا من الأصل

A WORKING WEEK FOR: HUSSEIN CHALAYAN

Bombed out even before the Valley of Death

With London Fashion Week in full swing,
Jon Ashworth meets a young designer
who refuses to compromise over control

Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday

Hussein Chalayan has the glazed, bombed-out look of someone who has seen one flashbulb too many. He turns up for the interview with the mournful demeanour of a child whose favourite dog has just been run over by the woman next door. Or that of the top student who just wiped out on all his grades. His handshake is firm, but he appears downright miserable. "I'm very interested in death," he confides, pouting moodily across the table. "I used to bury clothes in my back garden."

But then one cannot be too harsh. Chalayan did not sleep a wink on Wednesday night in the rush to complete his new collection in time for his turn on the catwalk at London Fashion Week. As the models flitted into the spotlight on Thursday afternoon, Chalayan was ready by the exit, scanning for flaws. "There are moments of panic, where you have the wrong model for the wrong dress, or the garment is on the wrong way round. You end up sewing safety pins on. When you're in that situation, it's terrifying, but looking back on it, it's quite funny."

Once the applause died, Chalayan was dragged out for the interviews — 13 of them, back to back, as it turned out. Then there was the party, and the backslapping, and the, er, post-mortem. Now, the morning after, it is hardly surprising that he looks a little jaded. "I see it as a job," he mutters. "It's good to show your face; to show appreciation for people who have turned up." To the tourists strolling down the Cromwell Road, London Fashion Week is a couple of monstrous wedding-cake white marquees, tucked in the shadow of the Natural History Museum, and surrounded by television vans.

Even without the press passes to get in, one word stands out: sponsorship. The slogan "sponsored by Vidal Sassoon" leaps out from the side of the tents. Lloyd's Bank, Rolls-Royce and Maurice Lacroix have their names in lights. Renault Espace has provided a fleet of cars. Harrods has laid on the Harrods bus. Even the caged dinosaur at the entrance is brought to you "courtesy of Wallis". This is big business.

The Hussein Chalayan stand is in an upstairs corner, looking on to a table adorned with glasses of orange juice and the remains of a croissant. Men with strange haircuts and thick-rimmed glasses look on as Chalayan poses moodily on the floor, musing to himself about death and mortality. Buyers from as far afield as Hong Kong and Korea have flown in for the festivities.

Even Ian Lang, the President of the Board of Trade, has called in: endorsing the £50,000 in sponsorship put up by the Department of Trade and Industry to

help young designers to participate. Designer names like Amanda Wakeley and Katharine Hamnett are the visible end of a huge industry. British clothing and textiles companies employ 410,000 people and boast an annual production of £15.5 billion; £5.5 billion of which is in export sales. Exports of British designer merchandise contribute £220 million a year.

Japan has overtaken America as the UK's largest export market, according to newly-released figures from the British Knitting & Clothing Export Council. Apparel exports to countries outside the European Union increased from £745.6 million in 1994 to £898.3 million in 1995. Exports to Japan grew by 25 per cent to £125.9 million. South Korea, Russia and Kuwait showed significant gains.

Chalayan, 25, graduated two years ago from Central St Martins and caught the eye of Browns of South Morton Street, who put his graduation collection on display. A fertile imagination was given free reign. "It's not a woman he's designing for," whispers a starstruck aide. "It just happens the medium he translates through is fashion. He's buried clothes covered in iron filings in his garden. He could have been a fine artist, or a film maker."

The designer, it seems, is fascinated by technology — he once incorporated a row of flashing LED lights into a jacket. Fine, but who wears such things? Well, Björk, for one. The Icelandic singer, last seen beating up a television journalist at Bangkok airport, is a "huge" fan of the Chalayan look. So is Kylie Minogue, but fashionable Cher has so far resisted the designer's charms. "You need a strong personality," says the aide. "It's not just for young girls."

Chalayan's current success owes much to Absolut Vodka, which awarded him a £28,000 bursary last year, and is providing more or less open-ended sponsorship. It recently stumped up a new computer system, and telephone and fax machine. "Designing is what we do and not shuffling paper," sniffs Chalayan.

Working from cramped quarters in Endell Street, Covent Garden, the Chalayan team has spent the past two months completing the 50 outfits in the new Chalayan collection, Still Life. The last week swept by in a succession of late nights. "We've been working on the show since the end of December," says Chalayan, relaxing in a coffee bar run by the ubiquitous Leith's. "It's been the hardest season for us. We were all eating at the studio. It became a bit of a commune at the end. It was a hard show for us, but it went smoothly."

While Tomasz Starzewski and others were enjoying their turn on the catwalk, Chalayan and his team were engaged in a final race against time. "You're going until the last minute," he muses. "That's the frightening part of it. You work for months, and the whole thing is over in 20



The morning-after look: after months of preparation and last-minute panic, the 20-minute show has come and gone — plus 13 interviews and a party

minutes. "Designing, Chalayan insists, is not about cutting pieces of cloth to order. It is about creating contexts; symbolising ideas. So what about the clothes-burying incident? Chalayan explains that he wrote a story, and wanted his clothes to go through the same thing — to attain a life of their own. "In my fictional narrative, a group of dancers have magnetised clothes. They are ridiculed by people who throw iron filings at them, then they are kidnapped, killed and buried." Not a side-splitting read, then? Chalayan shakes his head. "I'm very interested in death. I think, and there's always an aspect of that in my clothes." The garments were later dug up and cleaned.

Electric jackets and the like are strictly for the catwalk. Chalayan appears horrified by the prospect that someone might actually buy them. "Imagine trying to make 100 light jackets!" The new collection owes less to technology, and more to the art deco period — a subject to which he warms. "The media of that period was very manipulative. Religion and the media. The manipulation of the masses."

"I used the Art Deco cinematic influence in the show. It's like a metaphor. You start wearing it all the time." He starts mumbling about golden fangs, and emblems for 1930s films. "That time, was very beautiful, but very ugly behind. Up to the 1950s, everyone looked the same, whereas now, everyone is more them-

selves. It is more about a certain feel — 'Still Life', as in a still from a life, or still as in dead."

Chalayan's models emerged on to the catwalk on Thursday by way of a revolving platform, and this was all part of the theme. "Mannequins," says Chalayan. "Static. Revolving." Does he consider himself an artist? "I'm not anything," he insists. "Basically, it's just an evolution of ideas. I just see myself as myself."

Opinions about Chalayan are divided. Some hail him as one of Britain's sharpest up-and-coming designers, a name to watch. Others can't stand him. "I find his look really aggressive," says one observer. "All those skinny, skinny girls." Whatever, he clearly has some original ideas.

Chalayan was born in Nicosia in 1970, to Turkish Cypriot parents, four years before Turkish paratroopers descended on the island. The ensuing conflict has

coloured his life. Chalayan was in England at the time — he went to school in Highgate, north London, and his father remains here. His mother lives in northern Cyprus, but comes to his shows. "A lot of people have a very biased opinion about Cyprus," he says. "If you don't live there, you don't really understand. We're not Turkish. We're Turkish Cypriots. Had Turkey not come in, we would have been wiped out."

Chalayan is already mulling over designs for his next collection before the next UK show in October. He travels to Paris later this month, and will work on completing the current round of orders, before the cycle begins again.

So what does Chalayan do to unwind? A visit to the London Dungeon or the Chamber of Horrors? Perhaps Death Row in America? "He loves the cinema," croons his assistant. "He loves going out for meals and trying different types of

food. He went to Japan one-and-a-half years ago and had a great time."

And for the future? Chalayan hopes to continue building up turnover and sales without being forced into any big deals that would remove the element of control. A London businessman, whose identity is not disclosed, provides advice on cash flow and other financial matters. As one of the team puts it: "He helps us through the Valley of Death period when you've got all the orders and have to put it all together."

Chalayan is happy to leave the accounts to others. Does he hope to become a Karl Lagerfeld or Bruce Oldfield, with designs in every window? Chalayan shakes his head. "I would like to be quite exclusive. We have to try and strike a balance and not grow too fast. It's not about selling to every Tom, Dick or Harry. There is a certain image, and we want to preserve that."

HIDDEN ASSETS

Peer's political salon shows genius of a design pioneer

Joanna Pitman on the William Kent house that is now home to Eagle Star

This house "in its time... has been a centre of political power, the scene of high ambition". So wrote Sir Denis Mountbatten in 1984 in the preface to *A House in Town*, published by B.T. Batsford. He might have added that, since 1947, it has also been the West End office of Eagle Star, the insurance group, of which he was then chairman. The house is 22 Arlington Street — next door to the Ritz and fronting on to Green Park — a fine mansion designed by William Kent in 1740 and occupied over the centuries by a succession of grandees.

When Eagle Star bought the house for £250,000, it was in severe disrepair and had failed to find a private buyer. The firm had an eye to redeveloping the valuable site, and No 22's days appeared to be numbered. The house has, however, survived, outliving intrusive redevelopment proposals of the 1960s, and then, in the 1970s, finally undergoing lavish refurbishment that returned it to its original decorative splendour.

John Mills, surveyor in the rebuilding and redecoration, says that the house, "after many vicissitudes, is now several decades into its third century and is alive and well". He adds: "Alive because, although the restoration was in many ways its own reward, what has been produced is no mere museum. The house provides an incomparable venue for business and social functions."

In 1740, Henry Pelham, the future Prime Minister, bought the site of 22 Arlington Street, a fashionable area considered "absolutely the

ministerial street". The *New Review of London*, in 1728, noted "one of the most beautiful situations in Europe, for health, convenience and beauty; the front of the street is in the midst of the hurry and splendour of the town; and the back is in the quiet simplicity of the country".

To build a house fit for this site, Pelham commissioned William Kent, pioneer of neo-

Palladianism and an instigator of the Gothic Revival. Kent was also a book illustrator, and a designer of gardens, furniture, interior decoration and silverware, and traces of his many spheres of artistic endeavour remain at No 22. Ceilings in principal rooms consist of great gilded honeycombs of lozenges and octagons containing painted mythological

figures. The magnificent salon, probably designed in the last year of Kent's life, is in the view of David Walker, the art historian, one of the finest domestic interiors in London. Kent was a pioneer in his concern to integrate design, decoration and furnishing. The walls and seating decorated with crimson damask in the Great Room, overlooking the park, are testimony to the impact of his conceptions.

Pelham did not enjoy his house long. On the eve of the general election of 1754, he caught a chill from walking in the park, and died a few days later. A succession of distinguished residents followed him at No 22, including Lord Gower and Dukes of Rutland, Beaufort and Hamilton. The final private residents, the Guest family, held it for three generations before its sale in 1947.

Lord Guest, created Viscount Wimborne, was made the first president of the National Liberal Party. In 1931, and the house became an important political meeting place, as well as being the venue for private chamber concerts of the Quartet Society, organised by Lady Wimborne. The house was, perhaps, at its grandest in the 1930s, and the Quartet Society played out its swan-song as a private palace. During the Second World War, the house became a packing centre for the Red Cross.

Today, as well as being a magnificent office, and occasional concert hall, for Eagle Star, the refurbished No 22 serves as a monument to the genius of William Kent.



The Great Room, rehung with crimson damask as in 1754

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The serious business of annuities

WEEKEND MONEY

BOND BONANZA 41

Who is the latest Ernie millionaire?



Shop around to save on share deals

Marianne Curphey says competition means savings of £25-£30 on a single transaction

Private investors who want to buy and sell shares can save hundreds of pounds in commission by shopping around to obtain the best dealing rates.

Increased competition in the market means there is as much as £25-£30 difference in the price dealing firms charge for a single transaction worth £5,000.

There are also special offers for investors who buy and sell frequently — typically more than 12-25 times a year.

If you are confident about making your own investment decisions you can minimise your costs by choosing a cut-price share-dealing service.

Such dealers run "execution only" services. They buy and sell shares on your instructions without giving any investment advice, although even then there are wide variations in the prices charged and facilities offered.

City Deal Service, one such broker, this week cut its commission rates for deals of up to £5,000 to £15 from £20, plus a

DEALS LEAGUE

Name	No of deals per day
NatWest	1,600
Bardays	2,200
Lloyds	2,000
Midland	1,800
ShareLink	1,500
Capel Cure Myers	1,200
City Deal Service	1,000
Wise Speke	900

joining fee of £5. This compares with Midland Stockbrokers' (part of Midland Bank) charge of 1 per cent, or £50 for deals worth £5,000.

City Deal Service says it is able to confirm your trade while you are on the telephone, and it can offer a cheap service because of investments in new technology.

Midland, which is the fourth largest share dealer for private investors in the United Kingdom, defends its rates by pointing to the added value it offers: selected larger branches have ShareShops

with television screens showing the latest share prices and company news. There is also a free monthly stockbrokers' newsletter and a quarterly bulletin.

Michael Savory, director, said: "Some dealers are cheaper but our brokers can give advice and get you a good price immediately."

"There is no point in saving a few pounds if you lose more than that because the share price has moved before your order has been put through."

ProShare, an organisation which promotes wider share ownership, estimates that individuals currently hold £205 billion directly in United Kingdom shares. This compares with £126 billion in 1990, and £215 billion held in building societies.

During the 1980s, the Government was keen to encourage individuals to buy into its privatisation programme and millions of people took up the offer. The flotation of British Gas, for example, attracted four million individual subscribers.

SIMPLE OR DELUXE SERVICE?

THE more sophisticated investors among us have a wide range of options including freephone numbers, market advice, and longer opening hours.

Fidelity, for example, claims to hunt around for the best deal while you are on the phone making your order. The Share Centre's service is cheaper, but orders are processed only three times a day.

If you intend to trade in shares frequently, most brokers dealing in execution-only orders suggest you open a nominee account in which you are the beneficial, but not the legal, owner of the shares purchased.

Though this speeds up the sales process, it means you may not be able to vote at company meetings or claim

perks, and you may have to pay extra if you want your broker to send out annual reports or collect your dividends.

Some brokers, like Fidelity, offer margin trading, which means that you can use part of your share portfolio as collateral for a loan. Bear in mind that you will be charged for this, typically 2-4 per cent above base rate depending on your broker.

Others do not offer margin trading, saying it is alien to British share buying. These include YorkSHARE, the Yorkshire Building Society's share service, and Midland. Not all brokers will deal in the more unusual stocks.

Moneyfacts has a fax-back service on share dealing, available by dialling 0336 400245 on your fax machine.

THE COST OF DEALING

Broker	Telephone dealing charges	Joining fee	No of clients
Share Centre	£10.00	£5.00	100,000
ShareLink	£10.00	£5.00	600,000
Fidelity	£25.00	£25.00	38,000
YorkSHARE	£10.00	£5.00	150,000
City Deal Service	£5.00	£5.00	135,000
Midland	£10.00	£5.00	200,000
NatWest	£20.00	£5.00	1,000,000

*Frequent dealer service. **Commission

THE RIGHT FIRM FOR YOU

IF YOU want help in choosing stocks, an advisory broker will charge to assess your need for income or growth and your attitude to risk, and make share recommendations. A further service is offered by discretionary brokers, who require a minimum sum to start a portfolio — typically between £10,000 and £50,000 — and will charge a fee of about 0.75 or 1 per cent a year of the market value of your investments to manage it. They may buy and sell shares without consulting you.

There is also the collective option, in the form of investment clubs. These started in America during the depression of the 1930s. In the UK over the past ten years, they have grown and blossomed into social gatherings at which members make small regular contributions and share investment decisions. There are more than 1,200 clubs in Britain, with 15,000 individual members. Being part of a pool can cut the cost of stockbrokers' fees because most clubs use execution-only services. ProShare (0171-600 0984) has a guide for £25 on how to start up a club.

Small investors to the rescue

Poor old London Stock Exchange. The Commons Treasury Select Committee seems to have become naively convinced that Michael Lawrence, the Exchange's latest sacked chief executive, is the living embodiment of modern professionalism, betrayed by a cartel of clubland diehards. So the committee threatens another inquiry by the Office of Fair Trading into anti-competitive practices in Throgmorton Street.

If that happened, private investors should expect to lose out yet again. The Exchange sacrificed its credibility over the Taurus fiasco and is already being buffeted between academic regulators, knee-jerk politicians and scheming lobbyists. It has become the financial equivalent of the Church of England, floundering in its own loss of confidence and beset by internal wars. Both might best be put out of their misery, were they not so important to us.

The absurd plan pushed by Mr Lawrence only got so far, so fast, because the Exchange was drifting without leadership, prey to warring factions. The plan would bring in a New York-style dealing system, in which risk-taking market-makers would rapidly replace the British system, in which risk-taking market-makers act as wholesalers who must quote firm buy and sell prices but charge a spread between the two.

This drive for change is led by an alliance of global firms, who cannot be bothered to operate a different system in London, and big brokers, who see a chance to gain a bigger slice of investors' money at market-makers' expense. Clearly, both UK and US systems work

PERSONAL INVESTOR



GRAHAM SEARJEANT

well. Otherwise, US-style order-matching regimes would not have spread across the world and the UK would not have grown the world's top stock exchange relative to its economy. Neither is perfect, but investors have no compelling reason to swap one for another.

Responses to the Exchange's consultation paper underline this. There were two dominant themes. Why did the Exchange not offer the option of sticking with the present system and developing it, and what was the hurry? Beyond that, answers to the questionnaire were so diverse that Exchange staff are putting them on a computer in the hope of finding some common ground between 170 users, member firms and representative bodies who filled them in.

They need not bother. Opinions vary, but little enthusiasm for this radical change emerges among fund managers, the Exchange's biggest customers. That is intriguing. Powerless private investors account for two thirds of stock

exchange deals yet continually succumb to the might of institutions and companies, who need us but demand better terms at our expense. Crest, the new settlement system due this summer, appears to condemn small investors to higher costs and/or indirect nominee holdings. New issues are now reserved for the big boys, if it suits promoters.

Private investors' interests played little part in the Lawrence plan either, but would certainly be affected. Change could get rid of spreads that are usually wider on small deals. But trading odd lots would require more work by brokers, who would charge for it. And keener prices must be weighed against having to wait to buy or sell, which is worrying when markets move fast.

Private client brokers are split. Most are against a move to order-matching; they justify their commissions by negotiating better prices than market-makers quote on their screens. But big brokers who offer low-commission, no-frills dealing back the change. Their reasoning is crucial. The Exchange aims to start an electronic trading system in August that might offer a really efficient way for small investors to deal. But it would have to use quoted prices and would not be much good if they are poor. That looks no reason to scrap the system and start all over again. It does make a case for market-makers to quote their best prices, at least for small lots. If the Exchange, regulators and politicians all focus on the needs of small investors, they might achieve some such subtle reform, a reform that works.



End of road for cheap car cover

After 18 months of falling rates, car insurance premiums look set to rise again. General Accident, one of Britain's six biggest insurers and with 5 per cent of the market, gave warning this week that rates would rise by an average 4 per cent in April. Other insurers said premiums were likely to stop falling or rise slightly.

Bob Scott, GA's chief executive, said even "perfect" drivers would pay more. "The named driver, the perfect driver in the provinces with limited mileage who has had the benefit of rate cuts, may expect to pay more," he said. The Association of British Insurers, cites the severe winter weather as one reason for the rises — in spite of the growth of car crime, accidents are still the cause of the greatest number of claims, and these are always worse during a long period of icy weather.

The other reason is the fierce price war which broke out in 1994 as direct operations like Direct Line challenged more traditional insurers. Rates fell by 5 per cent last year, and this January Britannia Assurance, with about 26,000 motor policies compared with Direct Line's two million, said it was withdrawing from the market. It said it felt it was no longer worth its while to continue to compete for motor business.

Royal Insurance, meanwhile, said it expects rates to stabilise, while Direct Line said they are "bubbling along the bottom". Most insurers feel that further falls might mean writing unprofitable business. Commercial Union has said it will not cut rates to chase market share, and Guardian Royal Exchange said it had reviewed premiums last month and had made adjustments to rates for owners in specific post code areas.

Not all drivers will be affected, even if prices rise. Most insurers now use a combination of postcode, driving history and lifestyle information to assess risks individually.

Weekend Money is edited by Anne Ashworth

BY POST

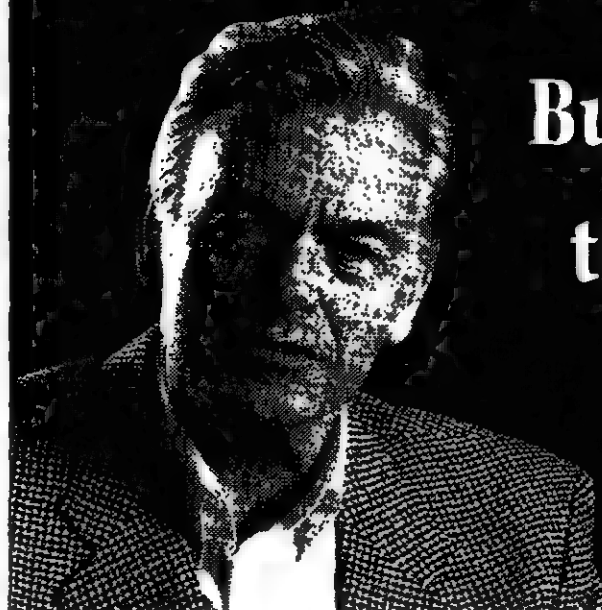
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Karen Zagor advises a cautious approach to buying a plan

WEEKEND
MONEY
GUIDE

Q What is an annuity?

A An annuity is a lump sum investment paying a guaranteed income which stops at your death. When your personal pension plan matures, the rules require you to buy an annuity from which your pension will be paid. The aim is to stop you spending all the pension money at once on a fiesta holiday and then becoming a burden on the State.

There is a wide range of annuities on the market, and it takes time and effort to choose the best product for your needs. Before deciding, you need to take your age and health into account, as well as your expectations for inflation in the coming years. The decision should not be taken lightly. Peter Quinton, managing director of the Annuity Bureau, says: "With an annuity purchase you must weigh up all options available before you buy because, once bought, you cannot change an annuity."

Age Concern notes that the choice of annuity can affect your retirement income by as much as 25 per cent.

Q Who needs an annuity?

A Members of personal pension and money-purchase occupational pension schemes must buy annuities.

Q Who does not need an annuity?

A Members of a large corporate scheme which is self-administered. The company will pay out the pension itself.

Q Must I convert all of my pension lump sum into an annuity?

A No. In most cases, you can take up to 25 per cent of your pension as a tax-free lump sum. Some, older, policies allow for a lump sum of up to 30 per cent.

Q What determines the amount of my annuity?

A Annuity rates are based partly on interest rates at the time you buy and partly on the overall amount of your pension savings. The more you have accrued, the higher your annuity payment will be. Women have higher life expectancies than men, so they usually receive less per month than a man on a similar pension. Insurers argue that they have to cover women for a longer period, so the differ-



A note of good fortune: Mrs Dashwood, in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, benefited from an annuity

An annuity is a very serious business...

ence is made-up in the long-term. Underlying annuity rates, which are largely based on long-term government bonds, can vary from day to day. Geoffrey Bernstein of consulting actuaries Geoffrey Bernstein & Co says: "Life companies will take the risk that you'll live to 120, but they do not like to take risks on investments. If prices on long-term government bonds fluctuate, they will move annuity rates as and when their margins get eroded."

Q How much flexibility is there?

A You are not obliged to take up the annuity offered by the company that administered your original pension. You can, and should, shop around for the most attractive rate, taking into consideration any loyalty bonuses or penalties from your own provider.

At the outset, you will have to decide whether to opt for a

flat rate. Initially, you will receive more from a level rate annuity, but inflation will take its toll over time and your pension may seem less than generous over the years. Alternatively, you can choose an annuity that escalates at a set rate each year or that increases annually in step with the retail price index. These will offer less attractive rates in the early years.

Then there are with-profits and unit-linked annuities that provide an investment element. While these may offer the opportunity to earn more from your money, they also carry the risks associated with any stock market investment, so your income is not guaranteed. They tend to have annual management charges, as well as a bid-offer spread. Advisers only recommend these schemes in conjunction with another, steadier, source of income.

Phased retirement annuities, where you split your annuity into segments rather than tak-

ing it all at once, were popular before the introduction of pension drawdown concessions. The new schemes allow you to defer buying your annuity while taking income from your pension fund.

Q When must you buy an annuity?

A In the past, you bought an annuity at the time you retired. Now, you can defer the purchase until you reach 75. This is an attractive option when interest rates are low. By deferring, there is the possibility of getting better rates later. If you defer your annuity, you can still make withdrawals from your pension fund, within certain limits set by the Inland Revenue. The amounts allowed will be based partly on the current rate for annuities. Checks will be made to ensure that you are not depleting your pension fund too quickly. People in company pension schemes can transfer the proceeds into a personal pension plan to

take advantage of the deferral process.

Q What are the disadvantages of deferral?

A If you delay taking your pension, you will either have to be able to live without the income, or draw income from your pension through a pension drawdown. There may be management and commission charges with a drawdown that will reduce the size of your ultimate pension. Furthermore, there are income withdrawal limits.

Q What happens to my spouse if I die first?

A You can cater for a spouse's benefit as part of your annuity purchase. This may mean a lower starting pension.

Q What if I should die with pension monies outstanding?

A Mortality risk is taken into account when calcu-

lating annuity rates. Those who die before reaching the average life expectancy will lose out while those who live far beyond their life expectancy will gain.

If you are worried about dying shortly after retirement you have several options. One is to buy an annuity which guarantees that your pension will be paid out for a set period — usually five or ten years — even if you die. Or you can opt for capital protection scheme that pays out the difference between income already paid and your original capital outlay. If you are in bad health, you can get an impaired life annuity to reflect your shorter life expectancy. Smokers can also get favourable rates.

Q What are the charges?

A Any variation from a standard annuity comes at a cost. Fees vary, depending on the product. A standard annuity also has charges, but they are lower.

Q Do I have to pay tax on my annuity?

A Income from an annuity is usually paid net of basic rate tax, but not all of your monthly income is taxable. Some is considered a return on capital, and not taxed. Non-taxpayers can usually arrange to have annuity income paid gross. William Burrows, director of Annuity Direct, notes that, in general, higher rate taxpayers benefit from phased retirement annuities because they can use part of their tax-free cash each year to provide income.

Q How do I find the best annuity?

A Read the money pages and specialist publications and consult an independent financial adviser. An IPA should help you to find the best scheme for your requirements, but it is important to educate yourself first. *A Brief Guide to Annuities* is free from Annuity Direct. Age Concern's *Pensions Handbook* costs £5.95 from Age Concern England, 1268 London Road, London SW16 4ER.

Where can I get advice? Specialist advisers include: Annuity Direct (0171 588 9393) charges £49.50 for an open market service kit and 1 per cent commission.

The Annuity Bureau (0171 620 4090) charges £58.75 for initial consultation, refundable if you buy an annuity. Minimum fee: £350 plus VAT.

Geoffrey Bernstein & Co (0181 346 0707) charges £350 plus VAT for report, refundable if you buy an annuity. Commission is 1 per cent.

the rich to reward employees as a way of providing for their relatives, such as Mrs Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility*, who received an annuity. Jane Austen wrote: "An annuity is a very serious business..."

□ New rules referred to as pension drawdowns allow you to defer your annuity until the age of 75.

□ Phased retirement or staggered vesting is another way of planning your pension.

□ You do not have to be married to be able to buy a joint-life annuity. Dependents, including handicapped children, can be included in a joint-life annuity.

MORAG PRESTON

Go for quality as bull run brings a rush to market

The recent confident run of the London market has brought a steady stream of new issues, with a sizeable queue of would-be entrants building up behind.

One corporate financier said: "The market is very strong and there is a lot of money around. Under these conditions you tend to get a lot more companies floating. While there are good companies amongst them, investors need to focus on quality."

Large flotations include Orange, the mobile phones group, which published its pathfinder prospectus this week, while the Government is buffing up Railtrack for its flotation which is expected to take place in May. Further down the line the politically sensitive flotation of British

shares can be bought or sold.

Andrew Miles, portfolio manager at advisers Chamberlain de Broe, says potential investors need to exercise fine judgments when assessing a share offer. They should examine the company's financial performance. If it is family owned or one where there is a dominant shareholder, find the reasons for selling now. He says: "If the business founders are staying with the company it gives you more confidence."

While there is a strong stream of companies looking to float this month, most are raising money via a placing rather than a public offer, so individual investors have to wait until dealings begin to get on board. Heading the queue is Orange, the mobile phone group, where at least 25 per cent of the shares will be offered to investors. The information line is on 0973 100 001 (see page 33).

Dealing in the Edinburgh-based Macdonald Hotels are expected to begin on March 14 with pricing details to be revealed next week. The company is joining via a placing and hopes to raise £25 million.

Three information technology businesses are going public this month. Data Sciences, a computer software company formed as a buyout from Thorn EMI, plans to raise around

£40 million from a placing. FI Group, a software services business, is also joining via a placing and is expected to be valued at £60 million, while Triad, a software and systems consultancy, is raising £35 million via a placing with dealings set to begin towards the end of the month.

Stadium, the plastics and electronics parts maker, is expected to make its debut within a few weeks, while next week sees the debut of Visual Action, the film and television equipment business, which has been involved with productions ranging from Star Wars to Cracker. Commercial printing group Fulmar also has its eyes on a £40 million float in March.

CLARE STEWART



Visual Action star C3PO



Calment outlives lawyer

Facts behind fixing an income for life

THIRTY-ONE years ago, Andre Raffray, a French lawyer, agreed to pay Jeanne Calment, then 90, a lump sum and £320 a month for the rest of her life on the condition that when she died he would inherit her house. The lawyer died at Christmas but, at 121, Madame Calment is the oldest person authentically recorded. M Raffray's heirs are still paying for her first-floor apartment. Every Christmas, Madame Calment would send him the message: "Sorry I am still alive." And talking of records, Mme Calment has just put out a rap CD, based on the tales of La Fontaine.

□ More than £4 billion of pension funds are converted to annuities

every year as people retire from work.

□ The youngest age you can buy is at two. There is no upper limit, although the maximum for a pension annuity is 75. If you smoke, you get a better deal.

□ Impaired life annuities provide higher income for those with a life-threatening medical condition.

□ Standard Life sells more annuities than any other life insurance company, according to a recent survey. Standard Life says: "In most cases, our rates are the best, and on our pensions side, in particular, we offer a greater degree of flexibility."

□ Falling annuity rates are not necessarily bad news. It means the value of pension funds has been rising.

□ Usually, between 70 and 75 per cent of a pension fund is used to buy a pension annuity.

□ The difference between the annuity rate, the various annuity offers made by life companies, can be as much as 40 per cent.

□ If gilt yields fall 1 per cent then annuity rates fall about 6 per cent.

□ Under an old-style section 226 pension policy, the tax-free cash can be as high as 33 per cent for a 75-year-old, compared with 25 per cent for a personal pension.

□ Annuity quotes are usually valid for 14 days, so take care if annuity rates are falling.

□ In the past, annuities were paid by

the rich to reward employees as a way of providing for their relatives, such as Mrs Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility*, who received an annuity. Jane Austen wrote: "An annuity is a very serious business..."

□ New rules referred to as pension drawdowns allow you to defer your annuity until the age of 75.

□ Phased retirement or staggered vesting is another way of planning your pension.

□ You do not have to be married to be able to buy a joint-life annuity. Dependents, including handicapped children, can be included in a joint-life annuity.

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Towards greater fairness for wives

The value of Prince Charles's pension is not likely to loom large in the royal divorce deliberations. The Inland Revenue pension contribution limits that constrain prince and commoner alike, mean that this asset will be insignificant compared to his other wealth.

For Charles and Diana, the news that peers had backed the campaign for pensions-splitting at divorce was merely a reminder that there are other failed marriages. But thousands of less exalted, but equally unhappy, households will be watching closely the fate of the peers' amendment to the Family Law Bill. This requires the division of pension assets at divorce, rather than at retirement. The financial condition in old age of divorced women now depends on the Bill's passage through the Commons.

Opposed to reform, though "sympathetic" to the plight of women without careers who

divorce in middle life, are Lord Mackay of Clashfern, the Lord Chancellor, and Lord Mackay of Ardbrecknish, the Social Security Minister.

The principal weapons in their defence are various sets of intriguing, but not necessarily convincing, statistics.

Take the £600 million figure thrown into the fray on Tuesday. This fearful sum is the tax revenue that will be lost each year if pensions are split. Closer inspection, however, reveals that this will be the cost if, not only divorced, but married couples opt to divide their pensions.

A divorced wife would be able to set her tax allowance against her share of her husband's pension. The two Lord Mackays seem to presume that, envious of this tax advantage, those who remain together would cut the husband's pension in two. With the deft use of the wife's allowance and the lower tax bands, the yearly bill could be reduced by as much as £1,060.



COMMENT
ANNE ASHWORTH
Personal Finance Editor

Since the Inland Revenue would never smile on such a ruse, perhaps their lordships presume that contented couples would separate purely to gain a tax concession?

A decree absolute might reduce the income tax bill. But the sorts of couples who consult accountants would soon discover that divorce would also mean the loss of far more valuable capital gains and inheritance tax concessions. You can, for example, bequeath all your worldly goods to your spouse, tax-free.

The National Association of Pension Funds,

which supports pensions-splitting, calculates that the tax lost (its figure is £80m) would be cancelled out by legal aid and social security savings. The hard-headed NAPF is interested not only in greater fairness for wives, but also the administrative ease of its members. They make a more persuasive case than the Government.

Cheers, anyway

THE word millennium has a noble ring. It also conjures up visions of the humdrum of a party at which you hope to be celebrating the end of the 20th century. These two

associations are obviously the reason marketing departments are now attaching the word millennium to accounts, maturing in the year 2000 (see page 40).

The Birmingham Midshires Millennium account requires you to leave your money untouched until the next century and pays a fixed rate of 7 per cent. This is slightly below rates on variable rate tax-exempt special savings accounts (Tessas).

Investing in the fixed-rate Millennium bond is a pledge of faith in low inflation, leading to low interest rates. Ian Shepherdson, economist at HSBC Markets, believes that inflation will not return. He forecasts that the base rate in 2000 will be about 5 per cent, making the bond look quite attractive. His most pessimistic peers predict a rate of 7.5 per cent.

If they are all wrong, then at least there will be a party where you can drown your sorrows.

Will investors in Orange tap into a bright future?

More details about the flotation of Orange, the digital mobile phone company, emerged this week with the publication of the company's 208-page pathfinder prospectus.

Orange expects the 325 million new ordinary shares to be valued at between £2.2 billion and £2.45 billion, with an offer price of 175p-205p a share. The anticipated offer price is about 15 per cent lower than most analysts had expected.

Dates for the UK retail offer have now been set. It will open on March 12 and close on March 22, with the exact share price to be fixed on March 27. Individual investors will have to buy at least £1,000 worth of shares to take part in the launch. No special incentives are being offered to Orange customers, although Orange's 2,500 employees will be given 50 free shares each.

Is the lower offer price bad news for private investors? No. By pegging the launch to a lower price, investors are more likely to see their shares increase quickly in value. The company's current owners, Hutchison Whampoa and British Aerospace, will retain about 74 per cent.

Why was the valuation reduced? Those involved in the sale say the lower valuation will improve the chances of the launch being a success. Others point out that rival mobile phone companies Cellnet and Vodafone have recently cut tariffs for their digital phone customers, putting pressure

Karen Zagor on some important considerations before signing up for action in the £2bn-plus float

on Orange. Market sentiment about technology stocks has also become less robust in the months since Orange announced its plans.

How will the share price be determined?

There will be a standard "bookbuilding" process between now and the offer's close. The company and its banking syndicate will sound out institutions to find how many shares they would buy at prices within the 175p-205p range. Information about which institutions could be long-term investors and which are in it for a quick profit will be noted. The offer price will take all of this into account. Will the final offer price fall within the expected price band?

There is no guarantee that the ultimate offer will be priced at 175p-205p a share. It is possible that the shares will be priced at a higher level if demand is very strong, and vice versa.

Is Orange a good bet for private investors? Most analysts think the future is bright for Orange. The company's growth has been

impressive since its launch 22 months ago. With 440,000 customers, it now has more than 25 per cent of the UK digital phone market. Digital connections are clearer and better for transmitting data than the analogue service that provides the bulk of the business for Vodafone and Cellnet.

In an industry where customers are frustrated increasingly by convoluted pricing structures, Orange, with its easy to understand tariff structure, stands out. The competitive rates are likely to keep existing customers and there should be no problem in finding new takers since only 9.4 million Britons have cellular phones. The proportion of cellular phone users is expected to reach 20 per cent by 2000. A research report by James Ross, of ABN Amro Hoare Govett, says "there is over £1.7 billion of potential upside in the company's value over the next five years".

What is the downside? Orange is not expected to post a profit before 1998 and dividends are not expected before 2000. Analysts at NatWest Securities do not expect dividends until 2005. This means investors who need income should not rush in. It is also possible that the overall market will not grow as quickly as anticipated, or that an as yet unknown technology will make digital mobile phones obsolete. A price war could also eat into Orange's profits.

□ The Orange Share Offer information line is open from 8am to 8pm on 0973 100 001.



The numbers game: Hans Snook, Orange managing director

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ment of account and an illustration of how much pension

Time and patience run out

SARA McCONNELL

period	% change	position in UK Equity & Bond Income sector
1 YEAR	+19%	1 (out of 36)
5 YEARS	+83%	3 (out of 17)
SINCE LAUNCH 26.10.84	+438%	1 (out of 9)

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Journal of Management Education 36(7) 809–824

1

The pension that never was

I have recently received two letters from Barclays Bank Staff Pensions. Enclosed was a certificate issued by Barclays when I left a few years after my marriage. I am rather confused as to why I do not seem entitled to a proper pension, having worked for Barclays for almost ten years from May 1960 (at 18) to December 1969 (at 27). I thought that staff with five or more years' service were entitled to a pension.

It is difficult to understand why Barclays will not give me a pensions booklet and an estimate of the amount I will receive when I am 60. The letters suggest that my entitlement is only the sum shown on the enclosed certificate. Surely this should be increased for inflation at least. I am 53 and would like a full view of the amount of pension to which I shall be entitled when I am 60. JUDITH RICHARDS, Shrewsbury.

A QUESTION OF MONEY

How much will your pension be when you retire? This may sound a simple question your employer or pension provider could answer at the touch of a few computer keys. Unfortunately it is not always so easy, as this look at our pensions postbag shows (Sara McConnell writes).

It is not surprising you were confused, as Barclays initially mixed you up with someone else when it first replied. In that letter it said staff had to complete five years' service and be at least 26 to qualify. This does not apply to you because these rules only came in in 1973, four years after you left. To its credit, the bank has since apologised.

"In your case, your career at

Barclays began and ended before 1973 so older, less generous rules applied. You had to have worked at Barclays for at least ten years and be at least 30 years old before qualifying. You unfortunately fulfilled neither of these conditions so do not qualify for a proper pension. Instead you will get an equivalent pension benefits payment of £10.25 a year, as Barclays was contracted out of the then state earnings related pension arrangements. This is not indexed for inflation so will be worth even less when you retire. As it is such a small amount, it will be paid by lump sum. But it says it cannot give an estimate of how much it will be. This depends on various factors including interest rates and long-term gilt yields when you retire and life expectancy rates. This information will be reduced to a formula to ascertain the size of your lump sum.



Cold comfort: Judith Richards is entitled to £10.25 a year

Tread carefully when toying with transfers

I am 60 years old and have no dependants. I work full time and am a basic-rate taxpayer. I am planning to retire at 65. My previous employer has a pension scheme and when I left, the pension was frozen as my present employer would not agree to its transfer, though both were with Legal & General. This pension will pay me £1,610 a year. I started a new pension with my present employer but four years ago it said it could not afford to continue with the scheme. It is being wound up but I do not know the value of this pension.

When this scheme closed I thought it best to start a personal pension. I chose Hearts of Oak and invested £4,500 of my savings in a lump sum in one plan in 1992. With tax relief the gross lump

sum is £6,000. I also opened a second Hearts of Oak plan and started investing £75 a month net (£100 a month gross). At the beginning of this year the £6,000 had a transfer value of £6,164. Would you advise me to carry on or even increase my £75 a month on the basis that I will at least get a tax break on my contributions? GORDON DEGG, Stoke-on-Trent.

Mark Bolland, a fee-based financial adviser at Chamberlain de Broe, said: "If the pension you are set to receive from your previous employer is not index-linked, you could consider transferring it. You have to tread extraordinarily carefully.

"People in generous occupational

schemes should not transfer. But in this case if there has been no revaluation for inflation since 1982, there could be an argument for transferring to a personal pension. It is important to choose a scheme with low ongoing charges, such as Equitable Life, as you only have five years to go until retirement." He said Mr Degg could get a reasonable L&G transfer as this is a final salary scheme with ten years' contributions. To save set-up charges, he said, the lump sum could be added to that from the previous pension in the same personal pension. He added that Hearts of Oak is not noted for better than average performance or lower than average charges. A transfer value of £6,164 after four years represents a return of 2% of a

percentage point compound a year. You should be able to get a better return elsewhere than on the Hearts of Oak schemes. Hearts of Oak confirmed the transfer value and said the cash value without transferring would be 5 per cent higher. But it refused to comment on your case or release any other information about your policies.

Letters are welcomed, but The Times regrets it cannot give individual replies or advice. No legal responsibility can be accepted for advice or statements in these columns and independent professional advice should be sought.

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2	4	3	3	3	3
3	5	5	4	4	4
4	6	6	5	5	5
5	7	7	6	6	6
6	8	8	7	7	7
7	9	9	8	8	8
8	10	10	9	9	9
9	11	11	10	10	10
10	12	12	11	11	11

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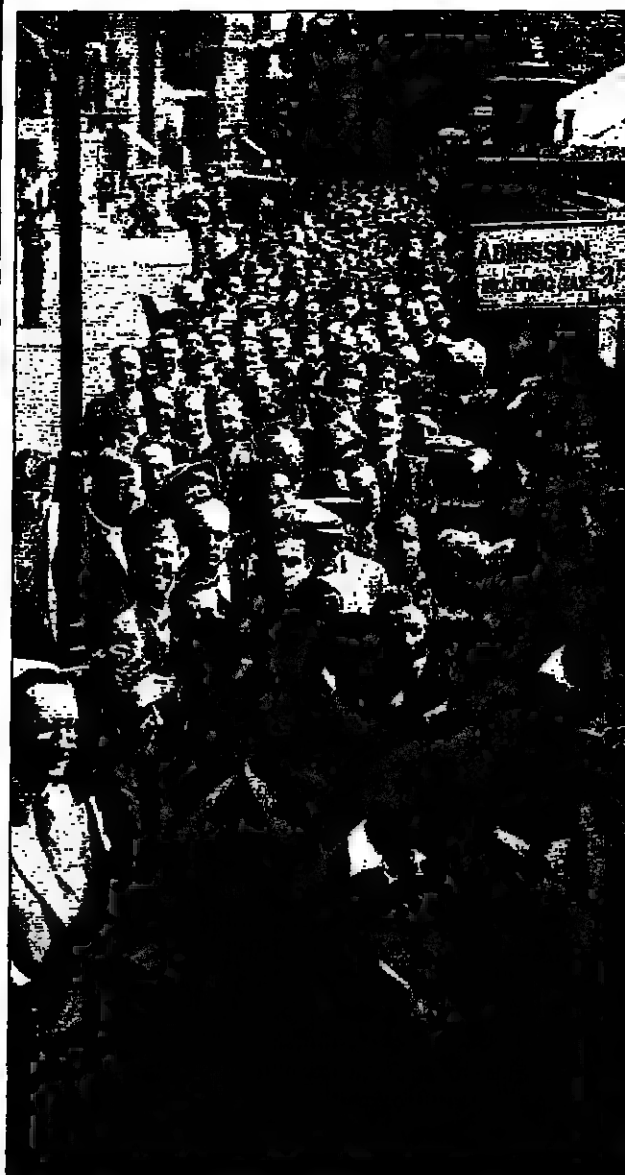
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The right moment to make an entrance is when prices are low

Timing it right will give an investment more pep

Caroline Merrell looks at three new trusts on offer amid warnings that it might not be the best time to buy

The small investor is renowned for getting things entirely wrong when it comes to choosing the right moment to put money into the stock market, invariably investing at the top of the market and selling at the bottom.

The sales figures for unit trusts in January are a reflection of this phenomenon, showing net sales of £1.4 billion, the second highest figure on record.

The driving forces behind the record levels of investment are the high levels of the UK stock market, millions of pounds available from maturing TESSAs and the looming end-of-year deadline for investment in personal equity plans.

The FT-SE 100 index has risen 20 per cent over the past 12 months, and some commentators believe that it will not rise significantly during the rest of the year. Three investment trusts that have been attracting a large amount of money and attention are Peps from Schroders, M&G and Perpetual.

The M&G and Schroders funds closed yesterday, and will start trading on March 8, while the offer on the Perpetual fund runs until March 13. It will start trading on March 21.

The fund managers claim that they have attracted millions of pounds worth of investors' money. Investors have also been attracted by the fact they can subscribe for shares equivalent to two years' worth of PEP allowance - £6,000.

However, financial advisers are saying that, in spite of the calibre of the investment houses involved, the funds could be set for a bumpy ride over the next few months. The last time the public poured money into two high-profile investment trusts, in this case specialising in European privatisations two years ago, the funds immediately moved to a big discount.

The fund managers, Kleinwort Benson and Mercury, have been attempting to narrow the discount by trying to increase the demand for shares through roadshows and offers on their savings plans, and by buying back their own shares. However, the 80,000 or so investors in these funds have yet to reap any real rewards on their invest-

ments. Financial advisers say anyone choosing to invest in one of these three new funds should take at least a five-year view.

Jason Holland, an analyst with Best Investment, said that his company was not recommending any of the three. "As a general principle, we are not recommending these trusts," he said.

"With the UK market reaching record levels, we do not think trusts based entirely in the UK are a good investment at the moment. These funds are being launched to coincide with the end of the tax year, they could end up issuing so much stock that it will kill demand in the after market."

Investment trusts that are not able to generate interest in their shares after they have started trading will often fall to a discount. This means that even if the fund manager does well and the assets of the trust rise in value, investors will be unable to redeem their shares for their asset value.

Schroders trust. "The fund is going to be quite aggressively managed. It will only hold around 30 to 40 stocks. Schroders have a reputation for looking at hundreds and hundreds of companies before deciding which ones to pick."

Those financial advisers who are concerned about the levels of the UK stock market would recommend personal equity plans with much more international exposure.

For example, Chase de Vere would consider putting its clients into an international PEP like the one offered by Fidelity. This has a choice of three different trusts - special situations, European and Far Eastern.

Mr Millward said: "The fund management group has excellent long-term performance." He pointed out that most of the rise over the past year in the UK market had been in the bigger companies. The special situations trust could invest in the companies that did not rise as much last year. European companies could also provide good growth prospects, he believes.

Chase de Vere also recommends an investment trust offered by Flemings, Fleming Worldwide trust is 45 to 60 per cent invested in UK equities, 10 to 25 per cent in international equities, and 20 to 30 per cent in high-yielding international bonds - emerging market debt.

The trust is designed to pay a 9.5 per cent yield. The yield will be generated by the ordinary income shares in the trust. The shares will return the investors' original capital in full at the end of Fleming Worldwide's nine-year life if the portfolio grows at about 5 per cent per annum.

Daniel Godfrey, Flemings marketing director, said: "The level of interest in the trust would seem to indicate that investors have taken the view that 5 per cent per annum growth from this type of portfolio is not excessive."

Mr Holland said that he favoured internationally diversified Peps from fund managers such as Perpetual and Morgan Grenfell. "Those who like the Perpetual name, but who already have too high an exposure to the UK, could opt for its Growth PEP. It has a good performance track record and is invested in countries other than the UK."

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Since the average wedding costs about £10,000, few can afford mishaps. Yet insurance is usually the last item on a wedding list, with only 20 per cent of weddings covered. A wedding is the most critical piece of organising people will do in their lives and the most expensive half day they will have to foot the bill for," says Brian King, of Ecclesiastical Direct, one of ten insurers covering weddings. "It is a huge financial risk, yet having it covered involves nothing more than a few minutes filling in a form."

Wedding insurance policies became available about eight years ago. Their growth was aided by the recession, when reception venues went bust, causing couples to lose deposits.

Steve Newman, of Insurex-Exposure, another company in the wedding insurance field, cites mishaps, such as a spark from a reception barbecue burning down the hotel, and marquee contractors wrecking flower beds.

Wedding insurance policies vary in

Insurers win a place at wedding feast

cost and detail. Most provide cover for cancellation for "any reason beyond the participants' control". Being left standing at the altar does not qualify.

Arrangements that must be pre-booked and paid for, including church, photographer, caterer, flowers and honeymoon, are usually covered. Couples can also claim if a wedding is cancelled because a close relative falls ill or dies. Exclusions can include lost rings (although some policies cover claims up to £500), accidents arising from dangerous sports, and the posting abroad of one or both of the couple.

Insurex-Exposure charges £2.50 per £100 of cover, and a special feature is that it pays up to £10,000 for "failure to

vacate" the reception venue. "A lot of places charge a steep penalty if the party stays over the booking time," says Mr Newman. Whereas many policies cover damage or theft of wedding attire and gifts for only a limited period, Insurex-Exposure offers cover up to £10,000 from the day the policy is taken out. It gives £1 million of personal liability cover.

Weddingsure, arranged by Jackson Emms & Co and underwritten by Cornhill Insurance, costs £45 and a special feature is bad weather cover. Jackson Emms started receiving calls this month from couples worried that snow would force cancellation of their wedding. However, the main concern,

according to Debbie Smart, of Jackson Emms, is the reception venue going bust. "That is often the most expensive part of the day," she says. The policy includes a legal helpline.

Home & Overseas, part of Eagle Star Insurance, launched its Safeguard Weddings policy on January 29. Taken in conjunction with travel insurance, it is designed for couples marrying abroad, and the cost is £25.

Ecclesiastical Direct's policy costs £35, and a special feature is cancellation cover if the couple are posted abroad. There is £1 million public liability cover.

Leisurecare Insurance, underwritten by Norwich, costs £42 for £3,000 cover. There is £500 cover for damage to the cake or to the wedding dress, including use of the dress on the day; many insurers take the view that once the wedding has started, the bride does not care what happens to her gown.

JENNAL COX

Marrying into money

Caroline Merrell
on the implications
of a Labour plan to
offer newlyweds
an interest-free
loan of £5,000

A Labour government should encourage people to marry by offering them an interest-free loan of £5,000, according to Tony Blair's right hand man, Peter Mandelson.

This recommendation is detailed in Mr Mandelson's book, *The Blair Revolution - Can New Labour Deliver?* He claims one option the Shadow Cabinet should seriously consider implementing is the provision of medium-term, deferred payment, interest-free loans. He also thinks that these loans should be extended to couples who for reasons of their own reject marriage.

This could include couples who live together, or couples of the same sex.

The loan would far outweigh any of the present financial benefits of getting married which are:

- **Married couple's allowance:** The extra allowance automatically paid to the husband which is equivalent to 15 per cent of £1,720 - £258. This rises to £1,790 in April, with £268. Once it was tax efficient to get married at the end of a tax year, and benefit from a full year's married allowance. Now, the allowance is apportioned according to the number of months of marriage in one particular tax year.



Wedded bliss: Imran Khan and his bride, Jemima Goldsmith, did not face money worries

- **Inheritance tax:** Anything left to your spouse is free from inheritance tax. Married couples can also make gifts between themselves and not have to pay inheritance tax or capital gains tax. These gifts are called exempt transfers. Gifts made to people other than your spouse, such as your children, are called potential-exempt transfers and are only tax-free if the person making the gift dies after seven years.

These gifts can be shares, property or cash. If you are not married, and you decide to make a gift to your partner, it will become taxable if you die within seven years.

- **Capital gains tax and income tax:** Husbands and wives have their own capital gains tax exemption, which will rise to £6,000 in April. If one partner is a lower-rate taxpayer, or does not pay tax at all, it could be possible to arrange savings to pay as little tax as possible.

- **Pensions:** Most occupational schemes are set up to give a pension to the surviving married partner of an occupational scheme member. The amount of pension received by the surviving spouse depends on the particular scheme - usually it is half the pension received by the member, but although some schemes such as

the one operated by the miners' union, pays widows or widowers two thirds.

Most schemes do not make allowances for common-law relationships or homosexual ones.

This is changing, and some schemes will treat non-married couples as though they were married, particularly if children are involved.

- **Death-in-service benefits:** Many companies offer death-in-service benefits equivalent to a multiple of salary. This is automatically paid to the next of kin, unless someone else is nominated. Therefore, a spouse would receive this, but a live-in partner would not.

Mother saves the special occasion

BARBARA MOORE'S wedding day was saved from disaster by her mother's insistence that she take out insurance.

In March last year, four months before she was due to be married, Barbara ordered her dress from a bridal shop in Surrey. For a £200 deposit they promised a first fitting within eight weeks. "It was wonderful," she said. "The shop said they could copy a dress I had fallen in love with." A week before her first fitting, she called the shop to check everything was going according to plan. The material had not yet been ordered.

"I couldn't believe it," she says. "I had to start tearing around London looking for the material myself."

The shop started to have the dress made, but, within days, went out of business.

Having lost her deposit, Barbara called Cornhill Insurance to make a claim. By return of post, she had a cheque.

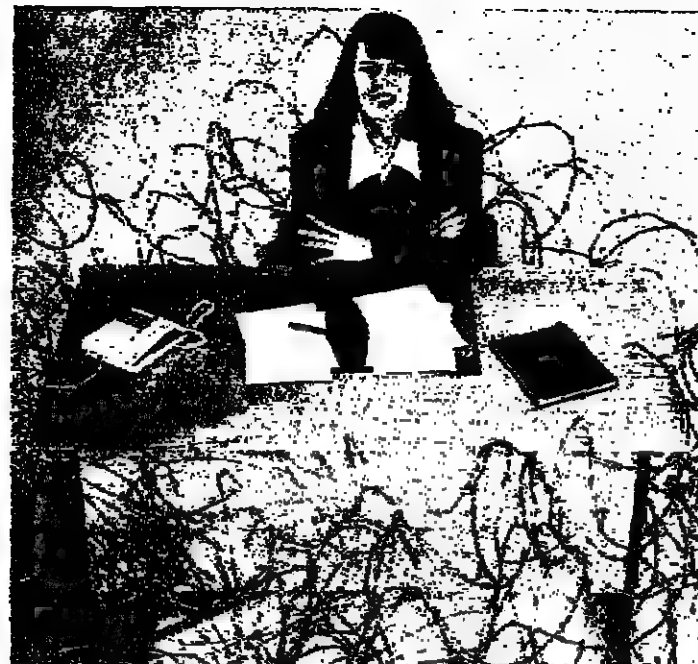
"They were really wonderful, so efficient," she said.

Barbara, who persuaded the freelance dressmaker who had been working for the bridal shop to finish her dress before her wedding in July, said: "I have to put it down to my mother. I would never have thought of taking out insurance. She made us do it as soon as we started shelling out money."

The wedding cost £4,000, the insurance £45. JC

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The value of valuations

Karen Zagor finds out the form
for those who want to know if
a knick-knack is an objet d'art

My father-in-law had no idea whether he was buying a pretty forgery or a priceless antique when he paid £30 for a *thangka* from a Tibetan refugee in Kathmandu 1969. "I was told it came from a Tibetan temple, and I don't think they had the facilities in the refugee camp to make it themselves," he said when he gave it to us as a wedding present 25 years later. When we decided to get it valued, we had little to go on. Luckily, London is rich in resources for valuing art and other collectibles, and it quickly became apparent that we would have no trouble getting information about our mysterious present.

Whether you have inherited a Gauguin from a favourite uncle or picked up an antique fountain pen from a flea market, there is someone willing to put a price on it. The definition of what is collectible is growing all the time. Guns and teddy bears are every bit as collectible as oil paintings, and just as easy to get valued. Before approaching a valuer, however, it pays to do a bit of homework. You should know as much as possible about the possession. A modern art specialist at an auction house says: "History is very important. It's important to know how long the painting has been with the present owner or in the family. We will also take into consideration the artist, the signature, the condition of the painting and any gallery or other labels on the back."

Auction Houses — The four main auction houses (Bonhams, Christie's, Sotheby's and Phillips) all offer free valuation. Valuables can be taken in, or a photograph sent in. Unless you live close to one of the houses, sending in a photograph is probably the best first step, but the image must be clear. The dimensions of the object should be included, as should enlargements of any signatures. A Phillips specialist in Oriental art said: "We can usually tell quite a bit from a good photograph." However, a firm valuation may not be possible unless an expert has actually seen the object.

If you want an over-the-counter valuation, it makes sense to ring before leaving home to make sure the appropriate expert will be available. Brendan Lynch, head of Sotheby's Islamic and Indian art department, was able to tell me a great deal about *thangkas* in general before breaking the news that mine was more of interest for its unusual iconography than for its actual value. He estimated that it was painted in the early 20th century.

If you have a sizeable collection or a few large, unwieldy objects, the auction houses will send someone to your home for the valuation. Sotheby's says there is no set fee for this service, it is negotiable. Christie's provides a printed, bound valuation document for those who pay to have a home collection valued.

While the auction houses provide their verbal valuation services for free, you will have to pay for a written valuation. Some, however, may rebate the cost if the item is auctioned within a certain time limit. When getting an object valued with the intention of selling, owners should consider its market.

Christie's and Sotheby's have a core business and great knowledge of European masters. Phillips is geared more towards decorative arts and is good on guns. The specialists will usually be quite candid. Bonham W & F Auctioneers: Montpelier Galleries, Montpelier St, London SW7; 0171-393 3900. Christie's International: 8 King Street, London SW1Y 6QT; 0171-839 9060, or 85 Old Broad Street, London EC2A 3JF; 0171-581 7611. Phillips Auctioneers: 101



Brendan Lynch, of Sotheby's, examines a *thangka*

New Bond Street, London W1 0AS; 0171-629 6602. Sotheby's Auctioneers: 34-35 New Bond Street; London W1 2AA; 0171-493 8080.

Independent Valuers — The decision about whether to use an auction house or independent valuer will depend partly on your requirements. Clare Parry, production manager at Nordstern, the specialist art insurer, says: "If you have a

house full of a great mixture of things, an auction house can call on in-house experts in a wide range of areas. Independent can be a bit quicker because there is not such a large organisation to get into motion." Another difference is that auction houses are primarily interested in selling, while independent valuers are purely concerned with valuation. To choose an independent valuer look for members

of the Incorporated Society for Valuers and Auctioneers or the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors. Antique dealers can also provide valuations; they should be members of the British Antique Dealers Association or Lapada, the association of art and antique dealers.

Museums — These can be a great source of information on the history and importance of

a possession is a museum piece.

Richard Burton, assistant keeper of the British Museum's Oriental Antiquities department estimated that my *thangka*, depicting Padmasambhava, the founder of Tibetan Buddhism, in his paradise, was painted in the 1920s. Mr Burton pointed out that the writing on the back, which included mantras, indicated that it had been used for worship. He was also able to show me a photograph of a similar depiction of Padmasambhava from the museum's collection.

A museum may be the best place to go for those who have an interesting collection which is not very valuable. Christmas card collections may not be worth much to an auctioneer, but a museum curator might find them interesting. To speak to a curator, ring first to find out what the museum's policy is about speaking to members of the public and whether the appropriate curator is available. Possible sources of information include the British Museum, the National Gallery, the V&A and the Tate.

The law — If you are worried that your amazing flea market find is the product of illicit gains, you should contact the Art Loss Register. The register keeps an image database of missing or stolen property from around the world. It includes any collectibles from oil paintings to garden sculptures. Send a clear photograph to the Art Loss Register, 13 Grosvenor Place, London SW1X 7HH; 0171-235 3393.

Insurance — If you have just one or two pieces worth a few thousand pounds you would probably have them included in general household contents cover. They must be itemised. A more extensive collection can be covered through one of the main art insurers: Nordstern, Hiscox (part of Lloyd's) and Chubb. Most people get specialist art cover through a broker, who will find the best value for the collection. "The main difference is depreciation after damage," says Ms Parry. "Under normal contents cover, if a painting were damaged, the cost of restoration would be covered."

"Under our policy, we pay for any fall in value as a result of restoration. If the picture was in pristine condition and now needs to be lined, that can have a detrimental effect on its value. For anyone who is at all serious, that is something to consider."

Specialists can usually tell quite a bit from a good photograph

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All rates above are variable and shown gross. A = Rates based: £20-1.00%, £500-2.00%, (£2.5k-2.20%, £5k-2.40%, £10k-2.55%, £25k-2.85%. B = Rates based: £20-1.00%, £1k-2.20%, £5k-



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Postal accounts come in and out of the market like ships into harbour, always leaving with a plentiful cargo.

Only a month after opening, Cheltenham & Gloucester's Direct 30 account has taken in as much money as it needs, so customers have to be quick if they want to get on board.

Interest rates, on average, are 1.5 per cent higher on postal accounts than their branch-based alternatives because of less expensive administrative costs. At present, 19 of 79 building societies provide postal accounts, although the number is increasing.

To make deposits, customers send their account book with a cheque, usually using prepaid stationery. Interest is added the day it arrives. Although there are instant-access accounts, most societies offer a range of 50-day, 60-day, and 90-day accounts that require a period of notice for withdrawals. Early withdraw-

als will incur penalties. The longer the withdrawal notice, the higher the interest rate. The longest term at the moment is 120 days offered by the Swansea and Chelsea Building Society.

Most societies offer a 24-hour turnaround on transactions. C&G is one of the few that allows its customers to make withdrawals during working hours, or to deposit money over the counter. Both Northern Rock's Instant Access accounts allow customers to perform transactions at the branch as well.

Among the instant-access accounts on offer, Donna O'Shea, manager of Chase De Vere's Moneyline service, picks out West Bromwich Direct. At 6 per cent gross interest on £20,000, 6.25 per cent on £25,000, 6.5 per cent on £30,000, and 6.75 per cent on £100,000, West Bromwich is one of the highest payers. She also recommends Bristol & West Direct Savings at 5.55 per cent on £10,000, 5.75 per



On average, interest rates are higher on postal accounts

cent on £25,000, 5.8 per cent on £30,000, and 5.85 per cent on £100,000.

Postal accounts are often used by customers who have enough in their bank account or high street building society for day-to-day living and seek a safe and financially sensible home for the rest. For smaller amounts, Miss O'Shea picks Yorkshire's First Class Access account at 5 per cent on £1,000,

5.1 per cent on £10,000, 5.2 per cent on £25,000, 5.45 per cent on £30,000, and 5.7 per cent on £100,000.

For investors prepared to lock their money away for a little longer, Miss O'Shea recommends Coventry's Postal 50 account offering an annual gross rate of 6 per cent on £10,000, 6.25 per cent on £25,000, and 6.5 per cent on £30,000. For smaller amounts, she picks Scarborough's 75-day account at 6.3 per cent on £1,000.

Bradford & Bingley's new Direct 90 account also deserves a look, she says. Savers can choose whether to receive interest monthly or annually. They can earn 6.8 per cent gross per annum, or 6.6 per cent gross per month, on deposits between £15,000 and £29,999. They can earn 7.2 per cent gross per annum and 7 per cent gross per month on £30,000 and over.

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Funds for the millennium

Caroline Merrell looks for value amid the latest marketing ploys

With four years to go until the end of the century, many building societies are taking the opportunity to unveil "millennium bonds". These are fixed or variable interest products which will come to maturity just before the year 2000.

However, do these bonds offer a good deal, or are they just marketing hype? Among the products on offer is a bond from the Birmingham Midshires Building Society.

This offers savers a four-year fixed-interest savings account, with the rate pegged at 7 per cent. The minimum investment in the bond is £5,000. Savers cannot touch the capital during the four-year period, but they can choose whether to take interest annually or monthly. Taking the monthly option means a lower income of 6.75 per cent.

The bond will be offered by the society until 26 April, 1996. Basic-rate taxpayers will get 5.6 per cent interest, while higher-rate tax payers will get 4.2 per cent.

National Savings has an equivalent five-year product which pays 5.6 per cent interest tax-free. If the bond is cashed in a year early, at the end of the century, for example, it will earn less interest — 4.76 per cent, making it a better deal for higher-rate tax payers than the Birmingham Midshires account.

Investing in a fixed-rate building society bond for

only three years, rather than to the millennium can also give savers a better rate of interest. Bradford & Bingley, for instance, is offering a 7.8 per cent fixed-interest account, with a minimum investment of £10, while Bristol & West is offering an 8.3 per cent account, with a £5,000 minimum investment.

National & Provincial Building Society is offering a three-year bond which offers an interest rate of between 6 and 6.5 per cent depending on the amount of money invested. The net interest rate is between 4.5 and 4.87 per cent.

Another building society that is gearing up one of its accounts for those who are saving for the end of the century is the Ipswich Building Society. Minimum investment in the bond is £10,000 with a maximum of £75,000. However, the interest rate on this bond is variable and starts at 5.5 per cent for investments of between £10,000 and £25,000, rising to 6.5 per cent for investments of between £50,000 and £75,000.

According to John Whymman, managing director, the millennium bond "offers an attractive combination of high rates and withdrawal facilities. It is aimed particularly at those investors who wish to invest for a period but still have some access to their money. We are sure this combination will be very popular."

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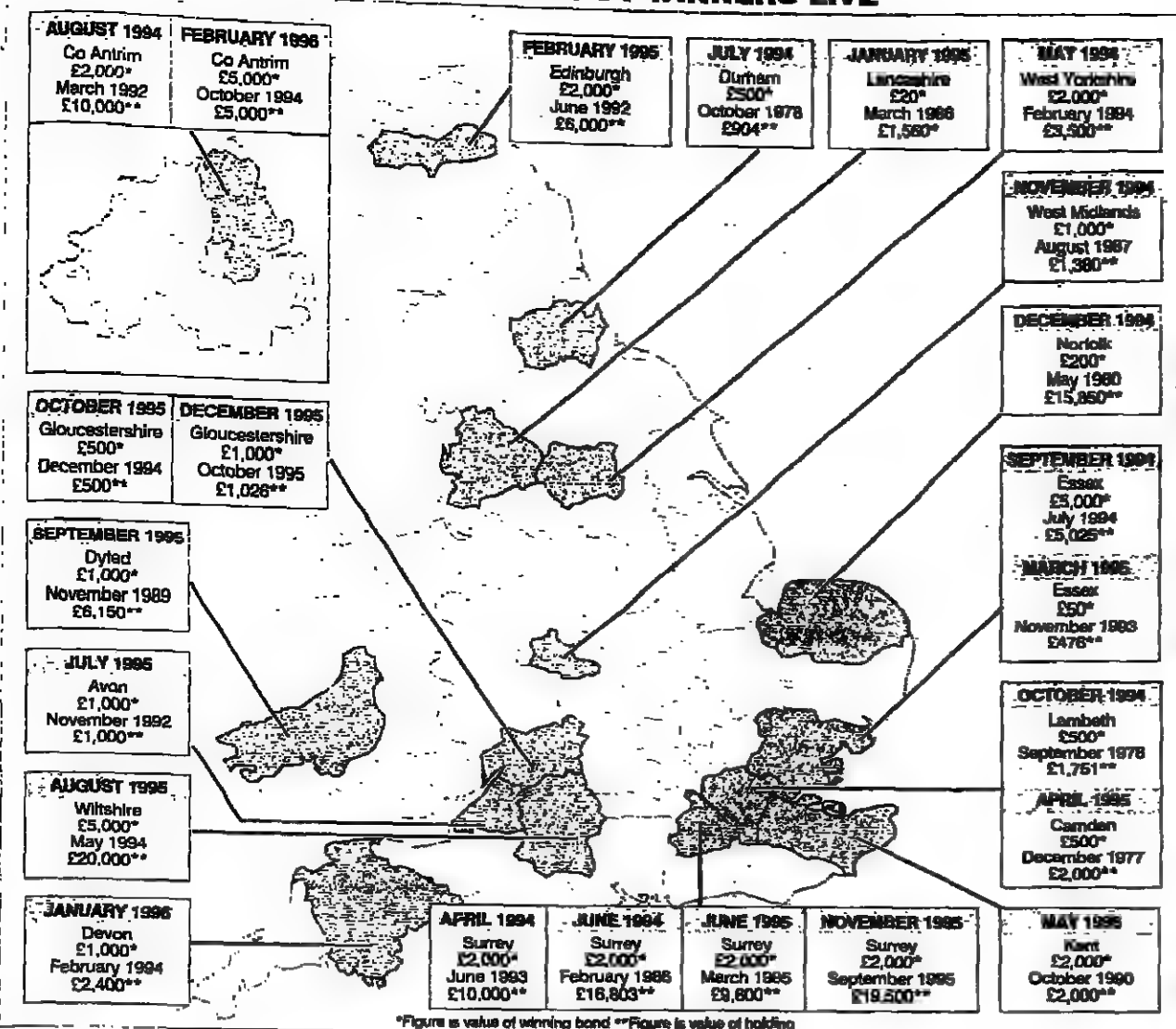
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WHERE THE JACKPOT WINNERS LIVE



Southern comfort from Ernie

An anonymous resident of Lincolnshire, the holder of Premium Bond number 3175 yesterday became the 24th Ernie millionaire.

The list of the 23 previous jackpot winners suggests that you stand the greatest chance of success if you live Surrey, which boasts four fortunate players, or Gloucestershire, which has three. These results would seem to support the widespread prejudice that Ernie has a Southern bias. But the Department for National Savings, Ernie's guardian, denies all such claims, pointing out that those who live south of the Watford Gap pick up prizes because they buy more Premium Bonds.

Those who cling to the belief

that location determines Premium Bond luck will, however, conclude that there must be something in the water in both Surrey and Gloucestershire.

In September 1995, a Surrey resident who already held £17,500 worth of bonds bought a further £2,000 worth. In November, the first month in which these bonds became eligible for the draw, he or she scooped the jackpot.

Bonds go into the draw in the first full calendar month after purchase. In December 1995, a Gloucestershire resident became National Savings millionaire of the month, with a bond from a £1,000 parcel purchased in October.

This winner holds only a total of £1,026 bonds, giving

the lie to another Premium Bond myth that only those who hold the maximum £20,000 worth of bonds have any chance of the jackpot.

Other modest-holding success stories include a Durham Ernie follower, the July 1994 millionaire of the month with a £904 stake.

In March 1995, an Essex inhabitant with a £476 holding opened the envelope bearing the £1m cheque. In October 1995, it was the turn again of a Gloucestershire holder, with £500 worth of bonds.

The £1 million prize, introduced to ensure that Ernie was not overshadowed by the National Lottery, has significantly boosted the popularity of Premium Bonds. Under the influence of the lottery, however,

the Premium Bond prize structure is to be changed in the May draw, the first for which bonds bought this month will be eligible.

In response to public demand, the number of larger prizes will increase. At the same time, however, the total number of monthly prizes will be fixed at 350,000. The prize fund interest rate, the proportion of the total amount invested with Ernie Bonds which is paid out in prizes, will be decreased from 5.2 per cent to 4.75 per cent.

The odds will no longer be fixed but will vary in each draw. At present, each bond has a one in 15,000 chance of winning a prize.

ANNE ASHWORTH

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THE BEST FIXED RATE
SIX MONTH BOND*

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GROSS P.A.

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- A Bond that offers a guaranteed rate of interest for six months.
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Because interest is added to your Fixed For Six Bond at the end of the six months, if you are a basic rate taxpayer, you'll benefit from the lower rate of tax that comes into effect from April 6th. Which means you get to keep more of the interest your money has earned.

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Amount	Gross** p.a.	Net p.a. Fixed
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£10,000-24,999	5.95%	4.76%
£5,000-9,999	5.90%	4.72%

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☐ I/we would like to open a Fixed For Six Bond (Issue 2) and enclose a cheque for £..... made payable to 'Bristol & West Building Society' followed by my/our name(s) and crossed 'A/C payee only.' ☐ Please send me an information pack.

NAME (INCL. TITLE):

ADDRESS:

POSTCODE:

TELEPHONE (HOME/WORK):

PLEASE SEND TO: FIXED FOR SIX BOND OFFER, BRISTOL & WEST BUILDING SOCIETY, FREEPOST, BRISTOL, BS38 7HP. TS/2/3

BRISTOL & WEST



BRISTOL & WEST BUILDING SOCIETY

*Gross rates are variable or fixed as shown and do not take account of deductions of income tax. If you are eligible to receive your interest without deduction of tax you should register on Inland Revenue form R15 which is available to all the Society's branches. Interest rates shown are not purely illustrative. We have shown here the lower rate of interest of 5.90% which comes into effect 06.04.96. Interest is credited or paid out at periods in accordance with the terms and conditions of the account. For conditions of withdrawal see the terms and conditions. Bristol & West Building Society is a member of the Building Societies Association, the Building Societies Ombudsman Scheme and subscribes to the Code of Banking Practice. Bristol & West Building Society, PO Box 27, Broad Quay, Bristol, BS99 7AB. *The references to best rate positions are correct as at 23/02/96. Source: Money Money Monitor.

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*Offer to bid price performance of Extra Income Fund with gross income reinvested 1.2.95 to 1.2.96. Since launch on 3.10.94 an investment in the Fund on the same basis would have grown by 20%. Source: Micropal. **Estimated gross yield as at 1.2.96. Part or all of the annual management charge may be paid out of capital - while this will enhance the income distributed it may constrain capital growth. The value of investments and any income from them can fall as well as rise and you may not get back the full amount you invested. Past performance is not a guide to the future. Tax concessions can change and their value will depend on your circumstances. Save & Prosper Group Limited is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and IMRO. We only advise on the products and services offered by the Fleming and Save & Prosper Marketing Group.

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Positive end to the week

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
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ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

BANKS

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

BREWERIES, PUBS & REST

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

BUILDING & CONSTRUCT

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

ELECTRONIC & ELECT

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

BUILDING MATERIALS

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

ENGINEERING

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

CHEMICALS

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

DISTRIBUTORS

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

ENGINEERING VEHICLES

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

FOOD MANUFACTURERS

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

ELECTRICITY

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

ELECTRONIC & ELECT

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

HOUSEHOLD GOODS

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

INSURANCE

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

INVESTMENT TRUSTS

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

LEISURE & HOTELS

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

MINING

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

PROPERTY

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

TEXTILES & APPAREL

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

TRANSPORT

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

RETAILERS: FOOD

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

PHARMACEUTICALS

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

PRINTING & PAPER

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

PROPERTY

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

TEXTILES & APPAREL

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

TRANSPORT

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

RETAILERS: FOOD

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

RETAILERS: GENERAL

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

WATER

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

RETAILERS: GENERAL

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

WATER

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00
1995	10.00	9.50	Guinness	10.00	+0.50	+5.00	15.00

RETAILERS: GENERAL

21	11.2
31	17.0
45	29.4
10	
18	
0.8	16.9
2.3	17.0
8.5	23.2
25	17.8
48	29.5
57	37
72	44.1
58	
45	
17	38.8
18	29.7
3.0	12.8
42	16.5
8.5	14.2
10	10.8
7.0	16.5

Saturday portrait: Rob Wainwright, by David Hands, rugby correspondent

Peaceful passions that invigorate Scotland's doctor in the hothouse

Captaincy is a delicate art. Come to it early and, whatever you do, there will be mistakes of youth and inexperience. Will Carling knows that; indeed, he has had them tied round his neck like an albatross at times. The Scotland rugby union selectors have tended to go the other way and choose mature men.

Take only the handful in the past few years: Finlay Calder, granite of countenance, inherited the mantle at 30. David Sole was 27 when his quietly passionate approach prevailed, notably against England in 1990, and, when he retired, Gavin Hastings, at 31, stepped up.

Now that he has departed, Rob Wainwright's elevation at 30 appears almost preordained. This season has set him firmly on the rollercoaster of publicity that rugby union now attracts, and never more than in the past fortnight, which every Scot hopes will terminate at Murrayfield today with a victory over England to secure only the fourth grand slam in Scottish rugby history.

Yet you would never have guessed at Wainwright's destiny in his teenage years. Born in Perth, the fourth child (and the only boy) in a family of five, neither his school nor his university presumed that captaincy, or even an international career, lay ahead for the lanky youth with a passion for the countryside. Even now, his stature, 6ft 4in and 15st 7lb, does not make him a giant in his position of flank forward.

"He was a competent rugby player," Bill Crow, who coached the young Wainwright at Glenalmond College, said. No more, no less. Wainwright's father, Jim, a Blue as a back-row forward at Glenalmond in 1956, was a teacher at Glenalmond and, for a period, warden (headmaster) of the school where his son captained the first XV in his third year. The Scotland schools selectors, though, did not come calling and he went to study medicine at Magdalen College, Cambridge.

The rugby authorities at university recall a somewhat startling

introduction to a tall, pony-tailed young man with green hair — the result of an accident with a bottle of dye in what his family describe as his New Romantic phase — but Cambridge began the maturing process that has ultimately brought Wainwright the position that he cherishes.

Not only did he spend six years studying, but he also joined the Army, who sponsored his last three years at Cambridge. "It was," Wainwright recalled drily, "an inspired move." Had it not been for his Service career, Wainwright would have found it impossible to combine a first-class rugby career with general practice, though, with little more than a year of his present commission to run, the long-term future remains in doubt.

'I believe patriotism to be a very good thing provided it doesn't get out of hand'

Yet the portents of a late developer and for a ferocious competitor are there for those who seek them. All his sisters have found an outlet in sport. Holly won a rowing Blue at Cambridge, Sasha a half-Blue for cricket and hockey, Alison runs half-marathons and Jo, his youngest sister, is a physical training instructor in the Royal Navy. His mother, Jean, took to marathon running at the age of 50.

Cambridge soon discovered his qualities. When a knee injury hindered his rugby, Wainwright took up boxing and won a Blue at heavyweight, disposing of a somewhat larger opponent by skipping lightly about the ring in the first round and providing the knockout blow in the second. An athlete, too, he went on the dreaded, early-morning fartlek runs with Dr Mike Turner, the veteran cross country runner who managed the

Great Britain team at the 1988 Olympic Games, and it was invariably Wainwright who was on Turner's shoulder.

"We have all been fairly athletic from an early age," Wainwright said, with the degree of understatement that has come to characterise his public utterances. Not for him the show of temperament, the verbal storm, but the laconic throwaway line and, in team gatherings, the gradual build-up before the release of emotion on the field.

Nobody should doubt Wainwright's fierce patriotism, even though much of his life has been spent in England. At Cambridge, playing with London Scottish and, latterly, West Hartlepool before the Royal Army Medical Corps moved him from Caterick Bridge to Edinburgh over the Christmas period, where he now combines GP work in a city practice with service at an army medical centre.

"There is more of a national identity with the Celtic nations," he said. "The chip on the shoulder, call it what you will. It can be unhealthy, but I believe patriotism to be a very good thing provided it doesn't get out of hand." Thus, Wainwright can be seen on the field, moving among his troops, a touch of the hand here, a quiet word there, keeping the motivation alive, the spirit strong.

He might have been a determining influence in the side before this season but for injury and the strong hand from which Scotland could pick at loose forward. Broken limbs and muscular strains have been the bane of his career and even this season he has been forced to visit the same clinic in Munich as Linford Christie and Colin Jackson, the international athletes, for manipulative treatment to his back.

He has played international rugby at lock, as well as in all three positions of the back row, but it is at blind-side flanker that he has come into his own.

"Rob's awareness from his own playing position is good," Ian McClellan, who coached Scotland's 1990 grand-slam XV, said. "He's strong on the ball and leads



by example, and that's exactly the sort of captain Scotland needed after Gavin Hastings. He works himself very hard, so as to be in every part of the field, and captains like that are like gold dust."

All Scotland, however, waits to see if Wainwright's tactical appreciation matches his drive and presence about the field. He admits that he is hardly aware of the scoreboard: decisions taken are those that appear to fit the situa-

tion. Thus, at a critical moment against Wales in Cardiff a fortnight ago, Wainwright called the back-row move that earned Gregor Townsend the decisive try, rather than opting for the dropped goal from close range.

"We knew the try could be scored and I thought that was the way to win the game, and get seven points rather than three," he said. Since Scotland won by two points, Wainwright was entirely

justified, yet, in the heat of victory, his frank assessment of Scotland's difficulties and his appreciation of a gallant effort by Wales brought immense credit upon both him and his team.

The image is further enhanced by Wainwright's affection for the countryside. Cameras will invariably catch him with his dogs, or his hawk (though that has recently flown away), or with his fishing rod. "I love the natural world," he

said — one that he looks forward to sharing with his wife, Romyne, and his children, Douglas, 19 months, and Natasha, six months.

First, however, comes the unnatural hothouse of international sport. The Wainwright family will be out in force today, his parents returning from their new home in Kenya to see if their own late developer can set the seal on a Scotland season that began in doubt but may end in glory.

Britain offer threat to Kenyan dominance

By DAVID POWELL, ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT

DO THE Kenyans have another victory in them? We are not talking cricket here. We return now to their proudest sport: cross country. Kenya will be seeking their eleventh successive men's world team title in South Africa three weeks from now. There is about as much chance of them losing to Great Britain as ... well, Kenya beating West Indies at cricket.

However, listening to David Clarke, the Great Britain team manager, one can almost visualise nine British tracksuits on the top of the rostrum in Stellenbosch on March 23. If not at the top, somewhere near.

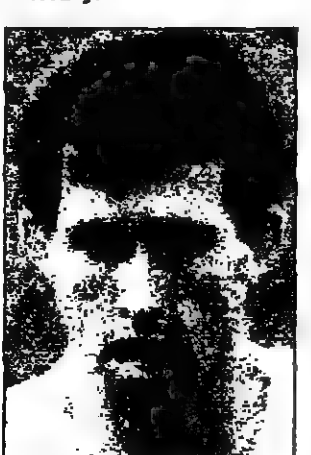
As the British trials at St Albans, Northumberland, tomorrow should indicate, Clarke has plenty of batting. "The Kenyans always seem to be unbeatable, but our first three — Andrew Pearson, Keith Cullen and Jon Brown — are not in awe of them," he said. "Rob Denmark, Adrian Passey, Gary Staines, John Nuttall and Jon Solly have all run well against the Kenyans."

That still leaves half a dozen others, notably Chris Sweeney, Martin Jones and Tim Dickinson, each anxious to be part of the strongest British team since bronze medals were won in 1992. "There is absolutely no reason why they should not get medals," Clarke said.

Among leading Britons, only Paul Evans, Eamonn Martin and Spencer Duval have ruled themselves out.

The first seven tomorrow are guaranteed places, with two chosen by the selectors. Given that Brown will not be running the trial, it is to be hoped that Pearson and Cullen do not have off-days and finish outside the top seven. Then, either Brown or Cullen would have to be omitted which, on form last weekend, would be British foot-shooting at its most painful.

Why Brown or Cullen and not Pearson? So much margin for error has Pearson built up with his form this season, including a European bronze individual medal, that he could finish on Monday and still expect to be picked. Assuming the worst does not happen, the selectors can slot Brown in knowing that he is the talk of road racing after his victory in the Gasparilla 15-kilometre race in Florida last Saturday.



Pearson: fine season

The field included Armando Quintanilla, a 27min 18sec 10,000 metres runner from Mexico, and enough leading Kenyans to form a cricket team — Yobes Odioki, the former 10,000 metres world record holder, and Lameck Aguta, the Commonwealth 10,000 metres champion, among them. The win ensured Brown's commitment to South Africa because, before that run, he had decided against competing in the world cross country championship.

Having gone to Boulder, Colorado, for warm-weather and altitude training, his plans were spoilt by a fortnight's snow. "I was not able to train as I wanted, so I decided not to do the world cross," Brown said, "but last week showed I was not far behind in my training."

He was reconsidering when Clarke called, emphasised the team's medal potential, and made up his mind for him. Cullen aggravated an Achilles tendon injury while finishing second in Diekirch, Luxembourg, last Sunday, but has been cleared to run. Paula Radcliffe was an injured British runner-up in Diekirch, too, hurting a knee, but is not risking it tomorrow.

Radcliffe, the 1992 junior world champion, is Britain's only hope for an individual medal. Her withdrawal from the trial is "precautionary", according to Alex Stanton, her coach. The first four women are guaranteed places in the team of six. Radcliffe can expect a discretionary slot.

Benn intends to leave no doubts

By SRUKUMAR SEN, BOXING CORRESPONDENT

NIGEL BENN should underline his status as the world's second-best super-middleweight when he defends his World Boxing Council (WBC) title against Thulane Malinga, of South Africa, in Newcastle tonight.

The champion, who had a controversial win over Malinga, wants to leave no doubts about the outcome this time. Indeed, since Benn wants to be seen as a realistic contender for the No 1 super-middleweight position, held by Roy Jones, the International Boxing Federation champion, it would not be surprising if he disposes of Malinga inside the distance.

Jones, who is the only man to have stopped the South African — who has had considerable experience in a career spanning 14 years and 49 contests — knocked him out in six rounds. If Benn can improve on that, his supporters will be clamouring for a match against Jones, even though, at the moment, it seems impossible to arrange because rival television companies are involved.

Not only does Malinga say that Jones would stop Benn in two rounds, but also he is convinced that Benn will not get past him to further his case for a bout with Jones. Malinga promises to stop Benn in five rounds.

Of all the disputed decisions that Malinga has received, the one against Benn in 1992 angers him the most. "That was a disgrace," Malinga said. "I beat him easily, and he

knows it. That's why it has taken him four years to give me the return that he promised after our first fight. He looks a shot fighter. I can't see any way that he can beat me."

Malinga did have Benn in trouble around the fifth round, and no doubt he thinks that he can hurt him again; but, while Benn has become a far better and wiser boxer since that meeting, Malinga appears to have lost much of his old resilience.

He did not impress against Trevor Ambrose, a journeyman from Leicester, but Malinga claims that that performance was because he had been out of the ring for five months. He says that he is much sharper now because he has trained harder than before and is motivated.

Malinga is really a light-heavyweight and if, in reducing, he has not lost his natural strength advantage, he could pose serious problems for Benn the further the bout goes. Benn has always had to work against bigger men like Lenzie Morgan, Mauro Galvao, Nicky Piper and Malinga.

Benn, who has been training with Frank Bruno in Tenerife, said about his first contest with Malinga: "I thought I nicked the fight for the first six rounds and it was close after that, but look where I am now and where he's gone from there. I've trained really hard for this fight because I know he believes he can beat me. This time I intend to knock him out, big time."

Beaten Anglo-Brazilians have excuses off expat

RECENT remarks in this column on the South American cricket championship could only be followed by a letter from D. K. Haskell, the British Ambassador to Brazil. He said: "My son, Paul, aged 19, who played for Brazil in the championship, is a little hurt by the description of himself as an 'ageing expat'. On the other hand, he is not particularly keen to recall the event, as Brazil lost to Argentina, Chile and Peru and ended up with the wooden spoon. Paul was born in Chile and has played for Peru, together with his brother Jonathan and myself. Has any other national team ever contained two brothers and their father?"

A little linguistic light on the competition was shed by Charles Fellows-Smith, who wrote to tell me that he was one of the "ageing expats" who played for Peru. The Argentinians had no problem with "batsman" (batedor) or "bowler" (boleador), but found "tail of last wicket" more difficult. This works out in splendid "Spanglish" as "caido ultimo wicket".

Fine mess

All British sports stars are obsessed by two ambitions: 1. To earn as much money as American sports stars, and 2. To get the media off their backs.

As Michael Atherton put it at the recent notorious press conference: "Will someone remove this buffoon?" Well, if sports stars want to learn from the United States, they should realise that, in the American view at least, these twin ambitions are incompatible. Albert Belle, one of the top baseball sluggers, is part of the I'm-so-great-I-hate-the-media tendency. At the World Series last year, playing for Cleveland Indians, he screamed abuse at Hannah Storm, the NBC television reporter. He has just been fined \$50,000. He is refusing to pay, and faces suspension.

Moving target

How about making bigger, faster stumps so that the bowler has more to aim at?

SIMON BARNES
On Saturday

This dire scenario is taking place in baseball, where the target is essentially Platonic, existing only in the perfection of the umpiring mind. Even as pitchers flex their rotator cuffs in spring training, they aim at a newer and larger strike zone. The old strike zone started at midway between armpit and belt, and went to the top of the kneecap. Now, it goes further: right down to the bottom of the kneecap. The idea is to encourage batters to have a go at the ball, rather than waiting for balls — misses — that entitle them to walk to first base.



Out for count

The other week, this column reported the mid-life crisis of Nino Benvenuti, the former world middleweight boxing champion, who walked out on his life to go and care for lepers in Madras. Two months on, he is back. "I must thank the lepers for what they have given to my life," he said. "The experience has brought me closer to God." Benvenuti is now seeking election as a member of the National Alliance, which is headed by the notorious Gianfranco Fini, a politician whose principal activity is the

constant refrain: "I am not a neo-fascist." The lady doth protest too much.

Passing the hat

Greg Norman, whose ambition is to take golfing clothes into a new dimension of hideousness, is seeking, as ever, to achieve this next-to-impossible task by means of self-publicity. His latest stunt has been to try to play a round with Sir Donald Bradman, the greatest batsman that ever drew breath. However, Bradman turned him down, perhaps in fear that he would be asked to wear one of Norman's ghastly hats. The Melbourne newspaper, Sunday Age, commented: "Norman should have tried to woo Bradman with appearance-money. It works for him."

Biter bit

Raymond Illingworth's style of leadership, as England cricket manager, has long included overt and covert sniping at his captain. I wonder what Illingworth thinks about people who snipe at him. Sir Colin Cowdrey, at the launch of Mike Gatting's testimonial year, said in the course of a speech that "sixty-year-olds are out of touch with modern-day cricket" — and he meant it to sting, by God.

Famous five

Get writing. The hunt for Wisden's five cricketers of the year is up and running. Predict the editor's selection of the players who did most to enhance the 1995 English season, and send the list to me — remembering, of course, that no player can win the honour twice. The five closest to the editor's selection win a copy of Wisden 1996. Closing date is March 9, so get moving.

Cup final separates the twin towers of basketball

By NICHOLAS HARLING

HOWEVER much Roger Huggins and Andy Gardiner have in common, which is a great deal, one thing is for sure — the smile of recognition and the fleeting touch of hands with which the 28-year-old basketball opponents will start the National Cup final tomorrow will be forgotten once the tie starts at the Sheffield Arena.

"At some part of the game, we'll be banging together," Gardiner said. Since their teenage years, when their friendship was formed, the careers of the two players have followed virtual-

ly the same path, to the point that their bond is now almost the telepathic one of twins.

The scorers of 11 points apiece for England against Russia on Wednesday, they both want to improve on those modest tallies in front of an expected 7,000 crowd.

Whatever happens between London Towers, Gardiner's club, and Sheffield Sharks, the team that Huggins represents, the two players will have a drink together afterwards.

It has been ever thus, since they first played for East London Royals. Bracknell Pirates and travelled to

Hawaii to study at Hawaii Lower College and Hawaii Pacific University, where they gained their degrees in social sciences and met the ladies in their lives.

Gardiner, the best man at Huggins's wedding to Heidi 14 months ago, said: "We're as close as brothers, but that friendship will go out of the window on Sunday. I'm excited to be playing against Roger in such a big game and I want him to have a good game, but, at the same time, I want him to miss a couple of shots."

Huggins said: "I want Andy to play well, but not too well. You've got to

consider the bragging rights over the summer. I don't want him to be going back to Hawaii, with me, saying: 'We beat you this and that.' They return to Hawaii each year, mainly to spend time with the families that hosted them during their studies.

If there is a discrepancy, it is in their heights. Huggins is 6ft 7in, an inch taller than Gardiner, who has also yet to match his friend's feats in being named player of the year and capturing his country, which was Huggins's dubious privilege for the first time on Wednesday, when England fell to their crushing defeat in Moscow.

Optimism in short supply among struggling rivals

FROM GERALD DAVIES IN DUBLIN

FOR all the talk of style and entertainment, it is a simple victory that Ireland and Wales long for this afternoon at Lansdowne Road. This would give them some breathing space to contemplate their progress, which another failure might delay. Both teams need a boost.

Ireland must conclude, if they had ever been persuaded otherwise, that the five nations' championship is a severe and heartless playground. In January, there was a spirit that encouraged predictions of not only a revival, but also an outside chance that they might challenge for the championship, even if this was born more from the weaknesses and doubts that were perceived among the rival nations.

There was so much that was open to question: with Scotland, who had been given an awkward couple of tests before the championship began, and with the coaching and playing personnel changes of France. In all this restlessness, Ireland might make capital, but this optimism was largely inspired among outsiders, who had drawn too many hasty conclusions from Ireland's resounding 40-point victory against Fiji and a more modest one

against the United States in rain-soaked Atlanta.

The resurgence failed to materialise, first against Scotland, and most emphatically when they lost by a record score in Paris, where they were further discredited by the actions of Peter Clohesy.

Ireland must ponder whether their fortunes would have been different had their confidence been bolstered by success in their opening game, which they must have thought then — and regret even more so now — that they could have won. Little separated them, yet Scotland are challenging for the ultimate prize today. Ireland quite the opposite. On such slender threads do the accomplishments of a team hang.

Wales, for their part, are aware of this, too. The difference, however narrow, in the final score is magnified for the winners and losers as they anticipate the next encounter. Ireland and Wales are feeling the weight of the psychological baggage of failure.

Wales know that, for all the enterprise shown by Robert Howley, the fleet-footed intrusions of Justin Thomas, the silky passes of Leigh Davies and the voracious appetite of Gwyn Jones — all on show

against Scotland — as well as the opportunities that they created, they found no vindication in the scoreboard. They have found the style, but not yet the manner of winning with it. The first part of the jigsaw is in place, but the victory that still eludes them is necessary if a fuller picture is to be achieved. The pressure that is beginning to burden them must not, at any cost, make them desperate.

Wales keep an unchanged team for the third consecutive match, whereas Ireland have made ten changes since their first match of the tournament. Rawness and inexperience appear to both. There is youthfulness in the Wales team and sureness in Ireland's composition, which adds uncertainty to the prospect.

Their last confrontation saw Ireland win 24-23 in Johannesburg in the World Cup, but Wales can point to four victories in their past five fixtures in Dublin. In addition, for what it is worth, the loser of this match has ended bottom of the championship in seven of the past eight seasons.

According to Terry Cobner, the former Wales flanker and captain, and now the coaching director for the Welsh Rugby Union, Wales must continue in the manner of their previous matches.

"I realise that a victory sooner rather than later is necessary, but, in our overall plans, it should not be interpreted as earth-shattering," he said. Cobner is aware of the need for patience. To enable the team to mature, but equally understands that continued failure could depress the team's enthusiasm.

Control will be necessary against an Ireland team that will need to recover credibility after Paris. There must be fire in the belly: the "Irishness", as Barry McCann, the former Ireland stand-off half, described it, needs to be restored to the team. This afternoon, before their own kind and after the bitter sting of Parc des Princes, is the time to show it.

New lighthouse points way for England



David Hands meets the new boy hoping to deny Scotland's lineout jumpers

Manned lighthouses around the country are being gradually phased out and Martin Bayfield doubtless has sympathy with the keepers. Bayfield, English rugby's own 6ft 10in lighthouse over the past four years, makes way for another today after 31 caps and an established place in the international hierarchy of lock forwards.

The greater reputation of the player discarded, the greater the obligation upon the one who succeeds. Nobody need remind Garath Archer of the demanding role that faces him at Murrayfield this afternoon, when he wins his first England cap amid the clamour and hubbub of Scotland's thrust towards the grand slam.

Yet the pleasure that he will take from the occasion is intense — not only the personal satisfaction of an ambition achieved, but also professional pride since Archer is in the process of leaving the Army to become a full-time rugby player. "I have been dreaming about this game ever since I was selected," he said.

Not that Archer believed initially that he had been chosen. Parked on the motorway alongside a punctured tyre on the way to squad training at Marlow, he thought that his leg was being pulled when encouraged to move himself as swiftly as possible because the team could not train without him.

Yet precocity has always marked his rugby career. He



Archer receives a few helping hands during a lineout training session yesterday

was born in South Shields in 1974, three years before the apogee of his father's playing career. Stewart Archer played for Westoe and Gosforth, for whom he appeared on the wing in the 1977 Cup Final, scoring a try in the victory over Waterloo.

The son followed the father's footsteps, pausing only to fit in a spell with Durham City, where Craig, his younger brother, plays flanker. Garath attended Durham School from where he won representative honours, a year young on each

occasion, for England's 16 and 18 Group sides. He also claimed the dubious distinction of being sent off as a 15-year-old, and was dismissed again playing for Newcastle Gosforth against Bristol in a league match two years ago. So the playing talent has

long been apparent, together with the restless energy which Archer — who has received two yellow warning cards this season — has yet to curb completely. The England hierarchy, however, has faith and, only yesterday, Mike Slemen, who has coached him for the North and England A, extolled his virtues.

"I was told he might be a problem when the North toured in South Africa, but he was no problem at all," Slemen said. "He has tremendous athletic ability, great physical strength and I think he stays very cool. He doesn't stand back from anybody, but his approach is very positive, he works hard, he has good hands and he will run until he drops."

Archer's name remained firmly in selectorial notebooks when he left school. He appeared in England's Colts and under-21 teams and, last year, made the first of ten appearances for England A alongside Simon Shaw. That has been one of the great ironies of English rugby: Shaw was earmarked as an international prospect from the moment he made an impact in England's mid-week team on tour in South Africa in 1994.

Archer moved from Newcastle Gosforth to Bristol last spring to join him, save that, by then, Shaw had been sidelined by a knee injury. The plan was for Archer, 6ft 6in and 180lb 8lb, to be Bristol's front jumper with Shaw in the middle, but the injury forced Archer into the position that he now occupies for England.

The England lineout in the championship this season has been lamentably inefficient and the management, believing that Bayfield could not throw off a technical fault in his jumping that which gave his opponents an advantage, decided to give Archer his chance in harness with Mark Regan, his club hooker. "It's a great boost to have my clubmate and good friend in the side," Archer said.

"We have established a great understanding and hardly lost any of our own ball. Now, I have to focus on the England game. I want to make the position my own."

TODAY'S TEAMS IN DUBLIN

IRELAND		WALES	
S Mason (Orrell)	15	W J L Thomas (Llanelli)	
S P Geoghegan (Bath)	14	I C Evans (Llanelli)	
J C Bell (Northampton)	13	L B Davies (Neath)	
M J Field (Macon)	12	N G Davies (Llanelli)	
N K P J Woods (Blackrock Coll)	11	W T Proctor (Llanelli)	
D G Humphreys (London Irish)	10	A C Thomas (Bristol)	
* N A Hogan (Taranure College)	9	R Howley (Bridgend)	
N J Popplewell (Newcastle)	8	A L P Lewis (Cardiff)	
A T H Clarke (Northampton)	7	* J M Humphreys (Cardiff)	
S S Wallace (Blackrock College)	6	J D Davies (Neath)	
D S Corkery (Cork Constitution)	5	E W Lewis (Cardiff)	
G M Fulcher (Cork Constitution)	4	G O Lewis (Neath)	
J W Davidson (Dungannon)	3	D Jones (Cardiff)	
W D McBride (Macon)	2	R G Jones (Llanelli)	
V C P Costello (St Mary's College)	1	H T Taylor (Cardiff)	
Referee: D Mene (France)			
Replacements: 16 K P McGuirk (Bective Rangers), 17 P A Burke (Cork Constitution), 18 C Savarimuttu (Sale), 19 P S Jones (Dungannon), 20 H D Hurley (Old Wesley), 21 T J Kingston (Dolphin).		Replacements: 16 G Thomas (Bridgend), 17 N R Jenkins (Pontypool), 18 A P Moore (Cardiff), 19 S Williams (Neath), 20 L Muscat (Cardiff), 21 G Jenkins (Swansea).	

Loughtonians seek leading edge

OLD LOUGHTONIANS are aiming to get back among the leaders in club hockey with six points available from two National League matches at Chigwell (Sydney Friskin writes). They play Barford Tigers today and St Albans tomorrow. They can expect tough opposition from the Tigers, who beat Teddington last week, but could find the going easier against relegation-threatened St Albans.

Reading face a severe test at East Grinstead and must win to keep their chances alive after a 2-2 draw with Cannock last week. East Grinstead could have a big say in the destiny of the first division title. Having beaten Old Loughtonians 3-2, they play Southgate next week.

Both Southgate, the leaders, and Cannock, in second place, have difficult obstacles to surmount, the latter at home to

Teddington and the former away to Canterbury. Guildford, in third place, are ready to capitalise in their match at Stourport.

Highdown, the leaders of the women's league, re-enter the league fray this weekend for the first time since December, only to discover that they must travel to Clifton and then trek all the way back to Doncaster tomorrow for an AEWHA Cup tie.

SPORT IN BRIEF

Street secures second world downhill prize

PICABO STREET, of the United States, clinched her second consecutive World Cup downhill championship when she finished second in a sprint downhill race in Narvik, Norway yesterday. She has an unbeatable lead in the standings with one downhill race left in the season. Street also the women's downhill world championship in Sierra Nevada, Spain, last month — the first American to do so.

Warwara Zelenskaja gave Russia its first women's World Cup victory when she won the two-heat race yesterday. Heidi Zurbriggen, of Switzerland, finished third.

Hylton bows out

ATHLETICS: Mark Hylton yesterday decided not to risk a groin strain and withdrew from the 400 metres place in the Great Britain team for the European indoor championships in Stockholm next week. Hylton, 19, the European junior champion, follows Melande Neef and Tony Jarrett out of the team named on Wednesday. Kent Ulyatt replaces him.

Unstoppable Catling

RUGBY UNION: A flurry of points in the final quarter earned England a 44-9 win in the student international with Scotland at Inverleith yesterday. Chris Catling, the Exeter full back, wrought much of the damage against a Scotland side playing together for the first time this season. Catling and Fraser Waters each scored two tries with a fifth falling to Matt Allen.

Double success for Hall

BADMINTON: c702 Darren Hall, of Essex, scored two of the best wins of his career by beating Thomas Stuer-Lauridsen, the bronze medal-winner at the Olympic Games and the world championships, and then Hermawan Susanto, the 1993 world championship runner-up, to reach the semi-finals of the Swiss Open in Basel yesterday.

Parrott powers into semi-final

JOHN PARROTT safely reached the semi-finals of the European Open snooker tournament for the sixth time in eight years when he convincingly defeated Dave Harold 5-1 at the Mediterranean Conference Centre in Valletta, Malta, yesterday (Phil Yates writes).

Parrott, from Liverpool, the winner of the inaugural tournament in Deauville in 1989 and again a year later in

Lyons, this afternoon meets Joe Swail for a place in the best-of-17-frame final tomorrow, with a first prize of £60,000 at stake.

Parrott, looking for his second world ranking event triumph of the season, after winning the Thailand Classic in October, shared the first two frames before compiling a decisive 59 break in the third, added the next two and finished strongly with a run of 77.

Parrott, a reliable overseas campaigner, having won titles in eight countries, attributes his relaxed frame of mind to the presence on this trip of Karen, his wife, and infant son, Josh.

"I have heard people on the circuit say you should never bring your family to work, but I don't believe that," Parrott said. "I am not aching for them like I do most of the time when I am away."

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WINNING MARGIN
SCOTLAND ENGLAND
7/2 1-5 pts 7/2
4/1 6-10 pts 4/1
8/1 11-15 pts 8/1
16/1 16-20 pts 16/1
33/1 21-25 pts 28/1
14/1 Drawn match

FIRST TRYSCORER
10/1 R. Underwood 14/1 Carling
11/1 Dods 14/1 Catt
11/1 Guscott 14/1 Hastings
11/1 Joiner 14/1 Jardine
12/1 Sleightholme 16/1 Shepherd
Penalty tries do not count.

WINNING MARGIN
IRELAND WALES
7/2 1-5 pts 7/2
6/1 6-10 pts 4/1
12/1 11-15 pts 6/1
25/1 16-20 pts 10/1
50/1 21-25 pts 20/1
16/1 Drawn match

FIRST TRYSCORER
8/1 I. Evans 11/1 N. Davies
9/1 Proctor 14/1 Bell
10/1 Geoghegan 14/1 Field
10/1 Woods 14/1 J. Thomas
11/1 L. Davies 16/1 A. Thomas
Penalty tries do not count.

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Return of Richards can tilt balance of power away from expectant Murrayfield

English resolve may deny Scots

BY DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

IF SPORT were a natural progression of events, then Scotland could be reasonably assured that, by tonight, rugby union's grand slam, the five nations' title, the Calcutta Cup — the whole shooting match — will be settling safely in the vaults at Murrayfield — as safely as the predicted £8 million spin-off to the local economy from the 20,000 supporters arriving in Edinburgh.

Only England stand in the way of the Scottish dream of a fourth grand slam to set aside those of 1925, 1984 and 1990. Only England? Only the team that, a year ago, won the grand slam itself by beating Scotland, and which has lost only once to the Scots in the past ten meetings. Only the team that, according to Jim

FIVE NATIONS
CHAMPIONSHIP

Championship table	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Scotland	3	3	0	0	51	38	9
France	2	3	0	1	74	41	8
England	2	1	0	1	33	30	2
Wales	2	0	2	2	28	37	0
Ireland	2	0	2	2	20	81	0

RESULTS: France 18 England 12, Scotland 18 Wales 15, Scotland 19 France 14, France 48 Ireland 10, Wales 14 Scotland 16.

REMAINING MATCHES: Today: Ireland v Wales, Scotland v England, March 16; England v Ireland, Wales v France.

Telfer, seldom appears over the horizon in anything but substantial strength.

Telfer, the Scottish Rugby Union's director of coaching, has drummed into his players that England's perceived fallibility means nothing. As an addendum, he will have mentioned that three out of four championship wins will not earn a place in the history books, not if England or, more likely, France, go galloping past to win the title on points difference. Yet those wins have served to build a great well of confidence in team and supporters alike. From the moment that Scotland won a potentially difficult opening game in Dublin, their momentum has been bubbling.

"We got off to a good start on what has proved to be our best-balanced display," Telfer said yesterday. "To win your first game, away, is a tremendous advantage, and that may be what England have suffered from."

Scotland have been living proof of the power of positive thinking, never more so than in beating Wales after a match

in which they retreated, tactically, from the invention that characterised their earlier games against Ireland and France. For that reason alone, their numerous well-wishers believe that they can earn and deserve victory in the Royal Bank international today.

Should they win, Bryan Redpath and Gregor Townsend, the half backs, will take much of the credit. Redpath has recovered fully from his bruised back and will fulfil both his role at scrum half and as the eyes and ears of Rob Wainwright, the captain. Wainwright's leadership by example. Redpath's sure hand on the tactical tiller, leaving Townsend to set opponents, and sometimes his own players, on their heels.

Yet will England let them do so? There has been a lack of direction this season, but, when they felt that there was no alternative to a simple game-plan — against France in Paris — England came very close to overcoming their inexperience, most notably at half back. What they have done once, away, they can do again.

Scotland have taken over the role from Wales as England's nemesis during the past decade, thanks in part to two heavy defeats at Murrayfield in the early 1980s and the 1990 grand-slam decider. If England do not stiffen the sinews for a meeting with

Scotland, they will not do so against any northern-hemisphere opponents.

There is a deceptive confidence about the squad, deceptive because, thus far, it has not always been justified by events. Yet again we are given to understand that the prepa-

ration has been first-class and that the squad, to a man, believes that it came close to breaking its bonds against Wales at Twickenham.

"I believe this side has a huge amount to offer," Will Carling, the captain, said. "It's a new, young side. You wouldn't expect it to play to its potential yet." What any England supporter would expect, however, is a degree of efficiency that has been lacking this turbulent season, a tactical approach that maximises the strengths of the squad and does not overreach its capabilities. That is why Dean Richards, the most down-to-earth of players, is back.

Richards has a feel for the game that Ben Clarke, the player he supplanted as pack leader, has yet to develop. Nor does his presence necessarily dictate that England play a slow, plodding game. Richards, it may be remembered, took part in England's outstanding display against Australia at Twickenham in 1988, and in that distinguished effort against South Africa in Pretoria in 1994. He was there

for the integrated performance against Western Samoa during the World Cup last year, which Jack Rowell regards as England's best display under him.

What Richards represents is control, the authority that may assist Matt Dawson to play in the style that won him his selection in the first place — a style that asks far more questions of a defence than he has yet demonstrated. England this season have asked notably few questions, save when their centres found ways through the Wales midfield. They have had a month now to set a new examination paper.

If this match is to be won anywhere, it will be in the mind. Scotland have created a feel-good factor, while England have appeared to operate in a mental fog. Today, England could find sufficient clarity to deny Scotland the prizes that their achievements so richly deserve.

Magnus Linklater, page 22
Wainwright portrait, page 50
Archer takes bow, page 51
Irish powder, page 51

Dallaglio needs to put shackles on Townsend



Rob Andrew highlights the problems facing England in tackling all-conquering Scots

IF this season has demonstrated anything, it is Scotland's ability to make the most — more than the most — of what they have. To a degree, the quality of their team has been predictable, but the unknown quantity was the performance of Gregor Townsend at stand-off half.

Townsend has brought a new dimension to Scotland's play and has been responsible for much of their success, notably in Ireland and against France. Therein lies England's problem today, because Townsend and Bryan Redpath, at half back, have been the linchpins of Scotland's season and that is where they must be stopped.

It will be fascinating to see how England cope with this problem at Murrayfield. Wales showed the way by squeezing the Scotland halves and, if England can put on an even greater degree of pressure, then we may see a different Scotland. They can do this in an individual and a collective sense. I would tell Lawrence Dallaglio to mark Townsend very tightly, almost to the extent of forgetting anything else. Dallaglio has bags of pace and he can bound Townsend, perhaps stopping him behind the Scotland forwards and giving England a platform.

Even before the ball reaches Townsend, England can do a lot. They must spoil Scotland's lineout possession to start with; Scotland are adept at getting second or third touch on lineout ball and England must reduce that, or get through the lineout to ensure that Redpath gets as little clean possession as possible.

They must also attack Scotland on their own scrum ball, by driving or wheeling, anything to put Redpath on his heels and reduce the possibility of back-row moves. England will be well aware that Redpath is so small and quick on the break that he can almost run under the tackles of big opponents and, if he does get over the gain-line, then Scotland are into their rucking game, the ball will be in Townsend's hands and anything can happen.

At the same time, England must offer a physical game, just as we always did against any France side that included Pierre Berbizier at scrum half. We would be in Berbizier's face all the time, putting him

off his game and, this afternoon, Scotland must be made aware that, whichever alley they choose to run in, they will hit a white brick wall.

This can be done only through good organisation. Now that Dean Richards has returned to the team, he will be doing a lot of talking. Dallaglio thinks well on his feet, anyway, and Ben Clarke has enough experience to know what he is about. I would never leave Richards out, so long as you accept that he is not a Zinzan Brooke or a Tim Gavin; he is Dean Richards with all his individual strengths around which you can build. He also has to urge



Townsend: linchpin

others to concentrate on what needs to be done.

This mental element has been part of the England problem this season. International rugby demands real concentration for 80 minutes and one or two players have not been able to sustain that. There is no excuse for the older players not to do so, but there is a clutch of newcomers still coming to terms with life in the first line. You should come off an international field mentally exhausted and that has not been happening.

Moreover, England, for the first time that I can remember, are underdogs, so the Scots have more to lose. They know that they stand on the verge of rugby history.

If England make a good start, maybe one or two Scots will become anxious. There was an element of that for England in 1990, when both countries were going for the grand slam and Scotland, in the lead, were defending heroically. You become so aware of the clock running down, the need to score and the light going out on the dream.

Keegan stands up for Asprilla

BY PETER BALL

NEWCASTLE United are not going to punish Faustino Asprilla, their new £6.7 million signing, they are going to defend him against all charges. As the club broke its diplomatic silence yesterday on the elbowing incident involving Asprilla, their Colombia striker, and Keith Curle at Maine Road a week ago, Kevin Keegan, the Newcastle manager, announced: "The club view is that it is an FA matter now and we are in their hands."

"We are not going to punish him because you saw what happened with Manchester United and Cantona. They punished him and then the FA added further punishment on top — so we'll leave it to them."

Keegan made no attempt to condone Asprilla's flying elbow during the game or his gesture with his head at Curle, the Manchester City captain, after the final whistle, but turned the case into an attack on "trial by television".

"I shall stick by him; if I don't defend him, who will?" Keegan said. "I don't think you can defend the two incidents as such, but, if we are going to have trial by television, the FA are going down a very, very dangerous road."

The BBC have highlighted two incidents concerned with one player. There was one other incident, at least as serious, of which no mention has been made. We will go down to Lancaster Gate with the video of the whole match and show them things that happened which were at least as serious."

Ian Wright, the Arsenal striker, has been censured by the FA for remarks made about referees. Wright, interviewed on the Arsenal clubcall line, described them as "incompetent" and said of David Elleray, one of the country's most senior officials: "He's not there to be a little Hitler."

Steve Claridge, the Birmingham City striker, yesterday completed his protracted £1 million transfer to Leicester City. Birmingham, who yesterday spent £500,000 of the fee on Paul Devlin and Andy Legg, of Nottingham County, stand to collect a further £100,000 if Leicester are promoted and a similar sum when Claridge has made 50 appearances.

Master Gullie, page 41
Draper's rise, page 41



Maguire will miss Cheltenham Festival

Maguire rues unlucky break

ADRIAN MAGUIRE and Norman Williamson, two of the brightest talents in National Hunt racing, were yesterday ruled out of the Cheltenham Festival, which starts a week on Tuesday, after sustaining injuries in separate incidents.

Maguire broke his right collar-bone in a fall at Newbury; Williamson suffered a further dislocation to his right shoulder when riding out on the Lambourn gallops. These are bitter setbacks for both men, who have been through a difficult 12 months.

Maguire, 24, missed Cheltenham last year after the death of his mother. His season has been blighted by injuries, the latest of which is expected to sideline him for up to 21 days. It is the third time that he has fractured his right

collar-bone. Williamson has ridden just twice since he broke his leg in a spill at Sedgemoor in October. Having dislocated his right shoulder at Newbury on February 10, he was to have his comeback mount yesterday after a week of schooling horses at Kim Bailey's stables, but his troublesome shoulder returned to haunt him as he attempted to draw his whip. He is to undergo surgery early next week and will be out of action for four months.

Williamson, 27, won four races at the Cheltenham Festival last year and finished the season with his best haul, riding 130 winners. He completed the Champion Hurdle and Gold Cup double, aboard Alderbrook and Master Oaks, respectively, to match the rare Fred Winter feat of 1961.

Bailey, who trains both horses, has approached Richard Dunwoody to partner Alderbrook and Jamie Osborne for Master Oaks, but both jockeys have prior commitments, to Fortune And Fame and Flashing Steel. A decision on the former's participation in the Champion Hurdle will be made on Monday.

Maguire's projected book of Cheltenham rides was the envy of his colleagues. He is retained by David Nicholson, the trainer who expects to saddle 25 runners over the three days. Nicholson was last night in contact with Charlie Swan, Ireland's champion jockey, and Richard Johnson, Nicholson's conditional jockey, will also be given his chance.

Racing, pages 48, 49

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Republican machine in South Carolina toils to rescue Dole's faltering campaign

Buchanan plays on old prejudices in Southern citadel

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

IT WAS a gambit straight from the campaign manual of George Wallace, the former Governor of Alabama, who stood in a school door in 1963 and declared blacks would never enter.

Yesterday, before dozens of television cameras, Pat Buchanan stood at the gates of Charleston's Citadel military academy and vowed that under his presidency no more women would enter that venerable, all-male institution.

Scores of uniformed cadets who skipped classes to greet their hero whooped and cheered in the rain as he denounced "left-wing lawyers" in Washington who forced the state-financed Citadel to accept Shannon Faulkner last summer. Miss Faulkner lasted just six days, most of them in the infirmary, but three more women are now suing for admittance.

"In my first week in office I will call those fellows at the Justice Department and say, 'Listen: as of today you are changing sides. You are on the side of the Citadel, or you are going back to Berkeley,'" he declared.

Mr Buchanan's defiant demagoguery may cost him a few women's votes into today's critical South Carolina primary,

but will delight the state's legions of social conservatives and the many southerners who deeply resent Washington telling them how to conduct their business.

Since his arrival in South Carolina on Wednesday Mr Buchanan, a master of the subtle gesture, has missed no opportunity to inflame the Old South's lingering resentments and prejudices. He has passionately defended the state's



US PRIMARIES

insistence on flying the Confederate battle flag over its statehouse.

He has gloried in his forebears who were Confederate soldiers. He has deplored the disparagement of General Robert Lee, the Confederate general, in modern school textbooks. He has shared a stage with Lester Maddox, the racist who was elected Governor of neighbouring Georgia in 1967 after chasing blacks

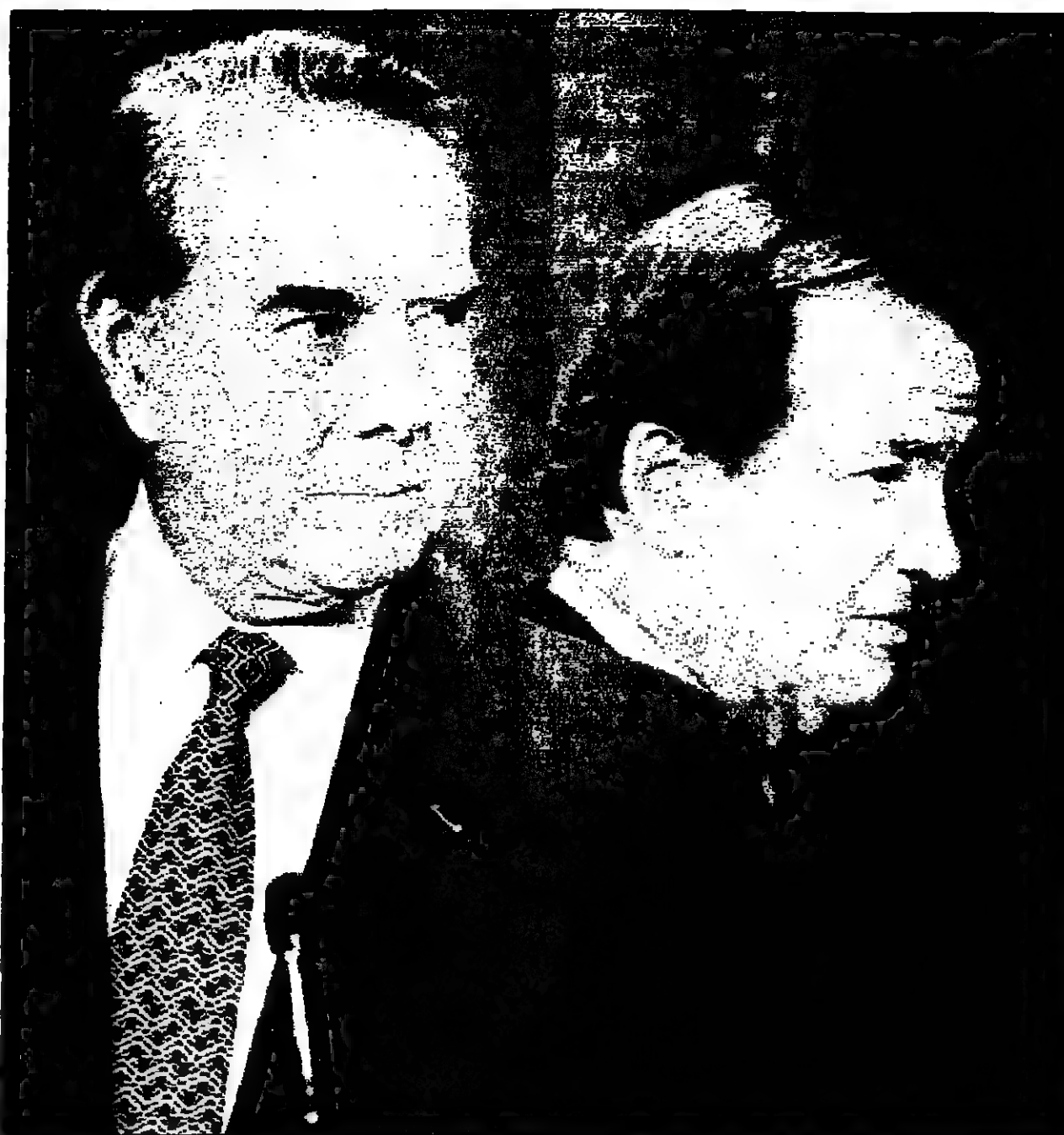
from his restaurant and then closing the business rather than desegregate it. He has pledged to restore the charitable status that Washington took away from a Christian fundamentalist college in South Carolina because it barred inter-racial dating.

Mr Buchanan is running an extreme campaign, but the stakes in today's primary are extraordinarily high. Robert Dole hopes a big victory will burst the Buchanan bubble, restore his own front-runner status after several disastrous weeks, and give him a huge boost before the six other southern primaries. Conversely, a Buchanan victory would be a near-mortal blow to Mr Dole's battered candidacy.

Today's result could also kill off Lamar Alexander, the former Tennessee Governor who has yet to win a primary. Steve Forbes, the multimillionaire publisher, also looks set for a disappointing result but has the money to survive.

Final polls showed Mr Dole ahead, and South Carolina's entire Republican establishment is working to deliver the state for him, but much will depend on the Christian conservatives who comprise up to half of the vote.

Leading article, page 23



Robert Dole, left, and his rival, Pat Buchanan, square up for a debate in Columbia, South Carolina, before today's primary

AROUND AMERICA

Peru air crash kills 123

London: A Peruvian airliner crashed into a 1,300ft-deep canyon in the southern Andes on Thursday night, killing the 117 passengers and six crew (Gabriella Gamini writes). Hopes of finding survivors were abandoned after rescue workers failed to reach the region until yesterday.

The Boeing 737 of the domestic Fawcett Airlines was flying from Lima, the Peruvian capital, to Arequipa when it came down as it prepared to land. Its fuselage was left hanging on a rocky hill while the rest of the aircraft was strewn along the canyon.

After reaching the site yesterday a rescue worker said: "All we have found are the charred remains of the aircraft and passengers."

Star criticises US journalism

Los Angeles: Robert Redford, who starred 20 years ago with Dustin Hoffman in *All The President's Men*, the story of two Washington Post reporters who uncovered the Watergate scandal, has said that the film was partly responsible for a continuing slide in the standards of American journalism (Giles Whittell writes).

The film's portrayal of journalistic power seduced a generation of high achievers with a tendency to put their egos above their craft, Redford said in an interview on his latest film, in which he portrays a television news producer.

Kevorkian tells court of his tears

Pontiac, Michigan: Dr Jack Kevorkian took the stand yesterday at his trial for assisting suicide, saying he sometimes cries after watching people die but feels obliged to help to end their pain. "My desire is to aid this suffering human being as I would any suffering entity," he said. "When I win at the suffering, I must do something." Dr Kevorkian said that he had never wanted his patients to die and had persuaded a number of them to seek a solution other than suicide. (AP)



Basulto: converted to doctrine of Gandhi

Cuban exile pilot takes non-violent path to oust Castro

FROM DAVID ADAMS IN MIAMI

JOSÉ BASULTO, the Cuban exile pilot who will today lead a fleet of aircraft and boats from Miami to a ceremony at the spot where a Cuban MIG jet downed fellow fliers a week ago, used to believe that military means were the only way to defeat Fidel Castro.

That was before he began reading about the works of Martin Luther King and studying the non-violent methods of Mahatma Gandhi. Now he dismisses Miami's handful of warrior exiles, who spend their spare

time at makeshift military training camps in the Everglades, as "useless for all practical purposes". Instead, Mr Basulto preaches his own brand of non-violence designed, he says, to encourage a peaceful civil opposition movement inside Cuba.

Acts such as today's ceremony at sea, he says, help to show Cubans that there are ways to confront the Castro regime. By taking risks ourselves, we have to show the people in Cuba that, if they are willing to do the same, they can win back the rights Castro has taken away.

Critics call him a provocateur who hopes to spark an international

conflict that would lead to American military intervention in Cuba. To avoid that, President Clinton ordered the US Coast Guard to escort today's sea and air ceremony, where prayers will be said for the four dead fliers, all members of Brothers to the Rescue, the Miami group of voluntary pilots founded by Mr Basulto.

The White House, taking every step to ensure a peaceful demonstration, has warned Señor Castro not to interfere in the protest service. The Administration has also insisted that the defiant memorial for the pilots must take place in international waters and threatened action against

any American aviator penetrating Cuban airspace. Angered by what it regards as further provocation, Cuba has demanded that Washington prevent the ceremony, although it says it will not intervene as long as the eddies remain outside its 12-mile limit.

Given Mr Basulto's past record, Cuba has reason to be suspicious of the motives of Brothers to the Rescue. Trained by the CIA in preparation for the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, Mr Basulto was infiltrated into the island as a radio operator shortly before the force landed. When it failed — betrayed, Mr Basulto believes, by the Kennedy Administra-

tion — he escaped by jumping a fence at the US base at Guantanamo Bay.

He returned to Cuba in the 1960s on commando-style raids by boat, on one occasion firing rockets at a hotel on the Havana seafloor housing Russian advisers. But increasingly he came to realise that armed struggle was futile and that neither the CIA nor the US Government could be trusted.

His final turn away from armed warfare came in the early 1990s when, moved by the plight of Cubans trying to leave the island on flimsy rafts, he developed the idea for Brothers to the Rescue.

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Spanish voters set to exorcise the ghost of Franco

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN AND EDWARD OWEN IN MADRID

SPAIN seems certain this weekend to elect its first right-wing Government untroubled by the legacy of Franco.

The old dictator's ghost has haunted modern Spanish politics, to the profit of the Socialists and the dismay of the conservatives. But when 30 million Spaniards vote for a new Government tomorrow they will confirm that the ghost has been exorcised.

"A vote for the Right is a vote for Franco," was a refrain that secured the last elections for Señor González, three years ago. This time, too, the Socialists have played the Franco card — relentlessly, and with little imagination — but to much lesser avail.

"No pasarán" — "they will not enter" — said Señor González, speaking of the Popular Party at a recent rally, in echo of a cry employed by the Republicans in the Spanish civil war. "We will enter," responded José María Aznar, with panache, at a later meeting in Valencia. "Señor González talks only of fear and bitterness. He talks of a Spain which does not exist to a Spain which does not believe him."

The Popular Party leader has a point. His party is as far removed from the legacy of Franco as it is possible to be — a legacy Señor Aznar described recently as "profoundly harmful for Spain" — and is almost exactly as a

party of Tory "wets" would be. His strength, of course, is due largely to the weakness of Señor González. Scandals have hit the Socialists at an astonishing rate, in waves as varied as the exposure of State-run death squads to the more basic, old-fashioned theft by ministers, bank governors and police chiefs. Unemployment, at 23 per cent of the workforce, is Western Europe's highest.

González talks of a Spain which does not exist to a Spain which does not believe him

But Señor Aznar deserves credit for putting to rest Spain's fear of "the Right". He is sober — almost to the point of dullness — courteous and unprepossessing. Learning important lessons from his 1993 election defeat, he is today slicker with the media and more pithy in his responses to provocative questions.

Yet his moderation has generated its own policy contradictions. He has assured Spanish voters that he will

neither raise taxes, nor cut welfare spending. Social security, however, is Spain's major problem, and the clearest proof that the country is living well beyond its means. Señor Aznar cannot, realistically, leave it untouched.

Sensing an unrevealed programme behind the election promises, Spain's pensioners are likely to remain loyal to Señor González. The financial and industrial sectors, as well as the employers' federation, have lined up to lend Señor Aznar their support. Deep down, they reason, must surely lie a commitment to economic growth and balanced books.

To govern on his own, Señor Aznar needs at least 176 seats out of the 350 in Congress. Opinion is divided on whether he will reach that magic number. Antonio Fontán, the former president of the Senate and now editor of *Nueva Revista*, Spain's best respected conservative journal, told *The Times* the Popular Party would win up to 180 seats.

Many others disagree. In the more likely event of his getting fewer seats than an absolute majority, Señor Aznar would have to rely, as the Socialists have done since 1993, on the parliamentary support of the nationalist Catalan and Basque parties, which have revealed little of their plans.



Felipe González waves to supporters with Catalan flags in Barcelona

Gorbachev aims to inject ideas into anti-Yeltsin battle

FROM THOMAS DE WAAL IN MOSCOW

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV, the former Soviet President, confirmed yesterday that he would be standing for the Russian presidency in June, despite universal predictions that he is heading for a fall.

Mr Gorbachev, 65 today, said Russian voters were looking for a third candidate to save them from the prospect of the two front-runners, President Yeltsin and the Communist Party leader, Gennadi Zyuganov.

"Two parties, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and the party of power, want to impose on us the rules of a game which deprive us of any choice," he said. He hoped to hold a conference of "democratic forces", in which he could make terms with the popular economist, Grigori Yavlinsky, who also sees himself as the democratic alternative to Mr Yeltsin and Mr Zyuganov. Mr Yavlinsky, whose poll ratings are much higher than Mr Gorbachev's, is unlikely to agree.

Opinion polls suggest Mr Gorbachev has the support of less than 1 per cent of the electorate and his chances of success are remote. A whole generation of voters blame him for the collapse of the Soviet Union and a fall in their living standards. However, in an interview with *The Times* last month, Mr Gorbachev said he was encouraged that many people were already pledging support.

Mr Gorbachev's decision to stand opens another round in the ten-year conflict between himself and his old rival, Mr Yeltsin, after a five-year truce. In a reflection of official contempt, the news on the second television channel, Russian Television, did not even record Mr Gorbachev's press conference.

Mr Gorbachev will be hoping to

profit from the plummeting popularity of the President. Set against an administration seen as overblown and corrupt, Mr Gorbachev is the model of integrity and, although the same age as Mr Yeltsin, he comes across as more energetic and dynamic.

The playwright Aleksandr Gelman argued in the weekly *Moscow News* this week that Mr Gorbachev would be an ideal President because he was not interested in power for its own sake. "I am sure if Gorbachev was elected the President of Russia, he would carry out his duties more successfully than any other current candidate." But he went on to say that he had no chance of winning.

If little else, the former Soviet President will inject some new ideas into the presidential debate. He said yesterday a top priority should be to abandon Moscow's current policy on the breakaway republic of Chechnya and negotiate directly with the rebel leader, Dzhokhar Dudayev.

Mr Gorbachev has been laying the ground very carefully for his re-entry into active politics. He made a series of trips to the provinces and published his memoirs. The book has already raised a stir about the allegations of Gorbachev's role in the sackings of Mr Yeltsin as head of the Moscow city Communist Party in November, 1987. According to Mr Gorbachev, Mr Yeltsin stabbed himself in the chest in his office with his desk scissors in an act of despair on November 9, two days before the sacking.

In Mr Yeltsin's own version of the incident in his memoirs, he says: "On 9 November I was taken to hospital with a severe bout of headaches and chest pains. My body had been unable to withstand the nervous strain and I had suffered a physical breakdown."

Tribunal charges Serb general

FROM STACY SULLIVAN IN SARAJEVO

DJORDE DJUKIC, the Bosnian Serb general whose arrest last month nearly undermined the Balkan peace process, was yesterday charged with crimes against humanity by the international war crimes tribunal.

The general, 60, is a close aide of General Ratko Mladic, the Bosnian Serb military leader, who was in charge of logistics for the Bosnian Serb Army. He is accused of aiding in the shelling of civilians in Sarajevo throughout the three-

and-a-half-year siege of the capital which killed more than 10,000 people. He is only the second of 53 indicted criminals to be in custody at The Hague.

Because he oversaw the transfer of weapons from Serbia to the Bosnian Serb Army and was in charge of supplying the front lines, the prosecutors speculated that General Djukic could implicate President Milosevic of Serbia in committing war crimes. They also hoped he could play a key role as a witness against

Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader, and Ratko Mladic, the Bosnian Serb general, both indicted for genocide.

Tribunal prosecutors gave up their hopes when General Djukic refused to co-operate. "Being unable to continue to regard General Djukic as a witness, we have had the opportunity of considering evidence we have against him," a tribunal spokesman said.

Milan Vujin, a Belgrade

lawyer representing the general, ridiculed the indictment. "This contains one fact: that General Djukic is in the Bosnian Serb Army," he said. "If that is all they have, we can get the trial over today."

□ Zagreb: Ante Gudelj, 48, a Croat convicted of a murder that helped to touch off the Serb-Croat war in eastern Croatia in 1991, has been extradited from Germany, newspapers reported. He was sentenced in 1994 in absentia to 20 years in prison. (AP)

Paris honours TV's Columbo

Paris: Peter Falk, the actor who plays Columbo, the dishevelled TV detective, yesterday became the latest American to be awarded France's highest arts honour (Ben Macintyre writes).

After Tina Turner, Sylvester Stallone and a host of other US performers, Falk, 69, was made a Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters. "Columbo" is so popular in France it has entered the language — an *Lieutenant Columbo* means a particularly dogged investigator.

Suspected killer dies in siege

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

A MAN believed to be the serial killer who has terrorised the small north Italian town of Merano for the past month died yesterday when police stormed a farmhouse two miles from the town.

There were reports that the alleged killer had shot himself before the police moved in. A note found by the body read: "You were too late." The man was named as Ferdinand Gampner, 39, a shepherd. Merano, a sedate spa town

in the mountains near the Austrian border, has been living in fear after a series of murders in which all the five victims were shot in the head late in the evening.

On Tuesday, a factory worker was shot dead in front of his fiancée while standing in the main cathedral square of Merano. The woman gave police a full description of the killer, which matched that of the body found yesterday. The killer was said to be a tall blond man with a blue rucksack on his back; a blue rucksack was found next to the

body when police entered the farmhouse yesterday. Police also found the .22-calibre gun thought to have been used in the killings. The farmhouse had been set on fire and the body of the alleged killer was partly burnt, along with other evidence.

Police had been called to the scene following the discovery of a body of a man aged 58 in a nearby hut. But when the police arrived they were fired on from the farmhouse, and a fierce gun battle followed in which one policeman was killed.

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THE SUNDAY TIMES

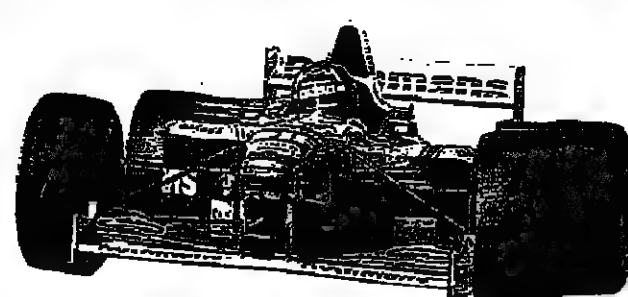
BANNOCKBURN OR CULLODEN...?



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THE SUNDAY TIMES BEST FOR SPORT

Divers explore 1791 shipwreck off Australia

Ocean may yield clues to mutiny on the Bounty

By Des Houghton

A TREASURE hunt is under way off the Australian coast for clues to one of the most infamous episodes in British seafaring history.

The wreck of HMS *Pandora*, which sank in 1791, has already given up scores of extraordinary relics. She was returning to England with 14 mutineers from the 1789 HMS *Bounty* rebellion when she struck the Great Barrier Reef and sank off Cape York.

Now, more than 205 years on, researchers are wondering whether *Pandora* may yield a different treasure: journals by mutineers recounting their side of the story of the uprising against Captain William Bligh. When the mutineers were recaptured in Tahiti their personal journals were seized and stored on the ship and may still be in the hull on the ocean floor covered with layers of sand.

Peter Gesner, the Queensland Museum archaeologist leading the exploration of the wreck, said yesterday a "Pompeii effect" had preserved many items uncovered there. He said there was a possibility, however remote, that documents could be recovered. Items recovered so far were in excellent condition because they had been buried in a sandy sediment in much the same way remains from Pompeii were preserved because they had been buried under layers of ash.

Iain MacKenzie, of the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich, said there was a "faint chance" Mr Gesner and his team of divers could find journals, but only if they had been wrapped securely and stored in a heavy chest or cabinet. "Some ships' records were securely bound in oil-cloth, others were sometimes placed in canvas bags before being stored in a chest or a cabinet," he said. "It was up to the captain. The more valuable the records, the more care was taken."

More than 400 items have been taken from the wreck, which rests in 100ft of water. The haul includes silver and brass coins, two cannon, numerous guns, medical implements, crockery, cutlery and glassware, buttons from officers' uniforms, brushes, ship's fittings, a quadrant, bolts and nails and a collection of Polynesian war clubs and carved shells which were probably collected in Tahitian waters during the unsuccessful three-month search for the *Bounty*.

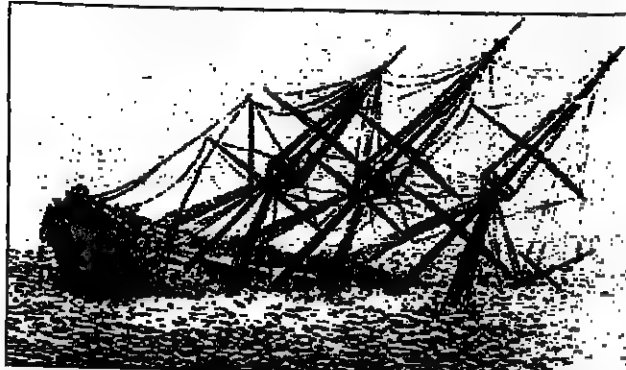
Other items which captured the public imagination when they were put on display in Queensland were a chamber pot with barely a blemish, and an intricately engraved fob watch. Last week Mr Gesner found a complete skeleton when divers using a water dredge began to syphon away layers of sand. "We have

another metre or so of sand to sift through, and it is getting interesting," Mr Gesner said. He said it was the second skeleton recovered from the ship which claimed a total of 31 crewmen and four alleged mutineers when it sank.

The first skeleton was examined by scientists and confirmed as a male aged between 20 and 25. It was re-interred in an underwater

burial service. A monument has been erected near the wreck on the ocean floor and a government order has declared the site out of bounds to pleasure divers.

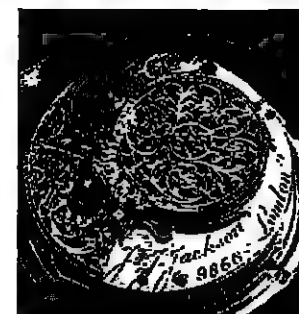
At least 25 per cent of the 117ft-long frigate remains intact. Mr Gesner hopes to find a sponsor to bring *Pandora* relics to England for public showing, possibly at the Royal Navy Museum at Portsmouth.



Pandora sinks after striking the Great Barrier Reef



The *Bounty*, some of whose mutineers were captives on the *Pandora*, and, below, a recovered gold fob watch



High-tech era opens at Paris Opera

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

THE home of the Paris Opera reopened last night after an 18-month restoration project that cost £20 million but has returned the 19th-century palace to its original splendour.

The Palais Garnier, built between 1861 and 1875 on the orders of Napoleon III and named after Charles Garnier, its architect, now boasts high-tech stage machinery, new safety controls and modern air-conditioning. The lavish interior has been completely renovated in accordance with Garnier's original plans, but the celebrated ceiling painted by Marc Chagall in 1964 has been cleaned and left in place.

Garnier meant the building to be "a temple to the eyes, the ears, the heart and the passions", but Verdi once dubbed it "the Grand Boutique". Under President Mitterrand, the building was exclusively dedicated to ballet, while the new Bastille opera house, one of the Socialist leader's grandest and most controversial architectural projects, became the official home of opera in Paris. Last night's grand reopening was marked by a concert performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* conducted by Sir Georg Solti.

Greece expels military attachés

FROM REUTERS IN ATHENS

GREECE said yesterday that it wanted Italy and The Netherlands to recall their military attachés in Athens after they were detained with documents which "could have been related to information on military installations".

A written statement by Dimitris Reppas, a government spokesman, said that the attachés, both from European Union countries, were not charged with criminal activities because of their diplomatic status.

"Notes were found which belonged to them and could have been related to information on military installations on the eastern Aegean island of Lesbos," the statement said. "Their recall has been requested."

The statement gave no details but it followed a question in parliament by a ruling Socialist Party deputy who said that the two attachés were detained on Lesbos in January, shortly before Greece and Turkey almost went to war over Imia, an Aegean islet, which Turkey calls Kardak.

Ships collide: Greece protested to Turkey yesterday, over the collision of a Greek missile boat with a Turkish Coast Guard vessel near Imia.

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■ OPINION

Britain may not possess a new Beethoven, but our composers are at least worth hearing again



■ THEATRE

Peter Greenwell proves melodious but bland in the Noël Coward tribute, *A Talent to Amuse*

THE TIMES
ARTS

■ BASE NOTES

Former Seeker seeks a new career: Judith Durham brings out her first solo album



■ BASE NOTES

... while in Germany the reclusive maestro Carlos Kleiber makes a return to the podium

The very words "modern music" strike a chill in the heart. don't they? And it is true that, until the early 1980s, the modern-music experience was about as welcoming as the whirr of a dentist's drill approaching a moulty molar. Even raddled old music critics (I speak from experience) used to draw up a mental balance-sheet before confronting a world premiere.

On the debit side: the new piece was probably going to be witless, tuneless, graceless and overlong. It would be called something like *Nobulion-Module VII/c*, and be accompanied by a programme-note riddled with pseudo-mathematical jargon that was even more impenetrable than the music. Quite an achievement.

It would be performed either very earnestly by bearded men in black polo-neck sweaters, specialising in squeaky sounds (the men, that is, not the sweaters — though I dare say that they, too, were selected for their uncompromising sonic qualities). Or it would be

Make friends with a nice composer

played very cavalierly by non-specialist orchestral musicians who made no secret of their contempt for the new work. One popular trick would be for the woodwind players, say, to spend the entire cacophony tootling by conductor, composer or audience.

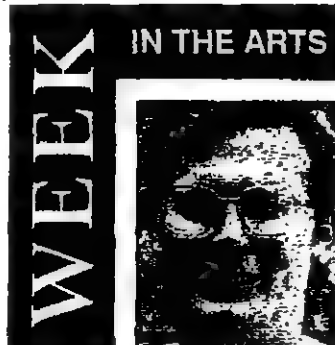
Oh yes, the audience. That would be a very select bunch: the composer's family, friends and publisher, the Arts Council apparatchik who midwived the composer's subsidy, and of course the critics. In other words, not many people who had actually paid for a ticket. And this charade went on night after night, year after year, bankrolled by taxes and BBC licence fees, and masquerading as some sort of brave exploration at the "cutting edge" of modern thought. What a con.

And on the plus side? Well, it

gave the critics something to write about. But even this plus side had a debit side: the critics never told their readers how depressing their evenings were. That was not surprising: like the composers, they made their living by prolonging the avant-garde lie.

In 15 years, much has changed for the better. True, there are still a few unreconstructed dinosaurs around, churning out electronic dross by the kilowatt. But the dictatorship of taste established by dogmatic BBC music mandarins in the 1960s and then maintained by acquisitive critics and sheep-like Arts Council music officers — a dictatorship that snuffed out tunes from the subsidised arts world for decades — has broken down. Now the profusion of styles is positively democratic.

Some serious British composers have followed the lucrative Ameri-



RICHARD MORRISON

can minimalist trail. Michael Nyman, he of the concrete-blasting scores to Peter Greenaway films, is the obvious example. Others, like John Tavener, purvey an appealingly tranquil mysticism.

Young firebrands like Mark-Anthony Turnage and James MacMillan compose works of terrific social passion. Nicholas Maw grapples with epic structures that revive the heroic tradition of Beethoven. Others, like Jonathan Dove, produce wonderful collaborations in the community with amateurs. Or, like Julian Anderson, they tap ethnic influences with amazing hybrid results.

Yet to the British public the words "modern music" still say "forbidding", "cerebral", or simply "not my cup of tea". Why? Perhaps because critics praised rubbish for so many decades that they are no longer believed when they really have something to cheer about. Perhaps because, in tough times, promoters are wary about flaunting anything unknown. And perhaps because

newspapers seize on peripheral but sensational tiffs that perpetuate cobwebbed old stereotypes — "Birtwistle versus the Hecklers", for instance — rather than painting the broader picture.

This week the Arts Council issued a "consultation document" on subsidised new music. It contains worthy ideas about new technology, and some distinctly cranky ones about adopting "a more holistic approach". Doubtless it will now be discussed by innumerable committees ... and have absolutely no effect on the central issue of persuading more people to enjoy new music.

That's sad. I know it is dangerous to make comparative judgements across art-forms; nevertheless, it seems clear to me that many British composers are now producing work that is far more vigorous and engaging than the

ponderously self-conscious tomes that pass for serious British literature these days, or the jejune installations that grace the Tate and Serpentine Galleries.

Yet each year we watch a media display of abject fawning as a cosy caboodle of critics and publicists wrap yards of hype round the Turner and Booker contestants. It's like wrapping tinsel round stunted rhubarb. As a result the British public is more aware of fourth-rate novelists and sculptors than it is of top-class composers.

That must change. Composers don't need long-winded "green papers" from arts bureaucrats. But they do need media-wise people to market them with flair and energy. In the past year I have heard works by all the composers I listed above. Not every piece was a masterpiece. But I have never enjoyed concerts of modern music so much. This is as exciting a bunch of composers as you will find anywhere in the world, and well worth exploration. I wish you would believe me. Millions won't.

BASE NOTES

IN its 50th anniversary year, Edinburgh's film festival — now bearing the intoxicating name "Drumbe" — will offer double the number of events presented last year, with several retrospectives. A series called *Films Which Changed the World* will include lectures by "international politicians and writers". Another series will concentrate on the films of 1947, the year in which the festival started. Silent classics and "the ten best documentaries of all time" are also featured. The festival runs from August 11 to 25.

THE young Welsh baritone Bryn Terfel has not encountered many setbacks in his climb up the operatic ladder. But his fans will be disappointed by his withdrawal from the Royal Opera's performances of Strauss's *Arabella* this month and next (his co-star, Amanda Roocroft, has also withdrawn). Terfel, who would have been singing the role of Mandryka for the first time, has said that his schedule is too heavy for him to prepare the role adequately. Wolfgang Brendel steps in instead.

MORE than 25 years after the heyday of the Seekers, the group's sweet-voiced lead singer is releasing her first solo album this month. Judith Durham's *Mona Lisa* will be on the EMI Premier label.

CLASSICAL music devotees with very healthy bank balances will be flocking to the Stadttheater Ingolstadt on Good Friday (April 5) to witness the latest return to concert life of the reclusive conductor Carlos Kleiber. Seat prices will range from £25 to £125 for a programme of Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms conducted by Kleiber — whose fee for the evening will probably be well in excess of £100,000.



Greenwell: "He bubbles affably along, whether cracking jokes about Sodom and Gomorrah or delivering a piece of spoof cynicism called *World Weary*"

Nice as a jellybean, but not the Master

As the posters outside the Vaudeville remind us, Alan Jay Lerner called Peter Greenwell the best Noël Coward since Noël Coward. After seeing the chap himself sing some Coward songs, and relay a few Coward memories, I am baffled by the description.

Greenwell does not look like Coward nor sound like Coward. He does not have Coward's dry charm or his asstringent wit. He wears a yellowish jacket and a pair of grey bags that Coward would have regarded as slightly less elegant than a winding-sheet. You could as well call Judi Dench the best Stephen Sondheim since Sondheim after hearing her sing *Send in the Clowns* in *A Little Night Music*.

This is not meant unkindly. Greenwell is a friendly, beaming cove, as efficient on the piano that fills the Vaudeville stage as you would expect Coward's one-time accompanist to be. He trots through the numbers that most people will want to hear: *Mad Dogs and Englishmen*, *Any Little Fish*, *The Stately Homes of England*, and, with a timely reminder that

THEATRE
A Talent to Amuse
Vaudeville

Coward was furious at a million mothers' refusal to heed his earnestly meant plea, *Don't Put Your Daughter on the Stage, Mrs Worthington*.

Moreover, he delivers several songs that are less familiar, at least to me. A diatribe against tourism called *I Travel Alone* — "What explains this mass mania to leave Pennsylvania?" — should be played day and night at every airport where people in shell-suits leave in jumbos for world beauty-spots. *Useless Useful Phrases*, which sends up the sort of phrasebook that encourages the English to tell foreigners "My cousin is dead, kindly bring me a hatchet", would make an effective encore for the tannoy.

Greenwell celebrates both the Coward who composed wonderfully acerbic

rhymes and the Coward who sentimentalised dear old London town. The trouble is that he hasn't the subtlety or range as a singer to distinguish very well between the two. He bubbles affably along, whether he is cracking jokes about Sodom and Gomorrah or delivering a piece of spoof cynicism called *World Weary*. It is like spending an evening with a very nice jellybean.

Did he tell me anything new about an artist whose every aspect ("he was, of course, terribly, terribly patriotic") he seems still to idolise? Well, I did not know Coward had written comic poems on travel themes ("if you've missed copulation in Gibraltar, go to Malta"). Nor did I know most of the anecdotes that punctuate the musical flow. If you want to hear how a genteel hotel receptionist told Bea Lillie she should say "personal summer" instead of "hot flush", this may be the one-man show for you. If you are looking for style and sophistication of performance, knock on another door.

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1812 OVERTURE

Sassenachs, welcome to Murrayfield

Magnus Linklater begs Scots not to play politics with rugby

The Garrick Club is probably not the best place for a Scot to be on the eve of a Scotland-England rugby international. An event which is a national obsession north of the border is here reduced to a topic for genial banter. Polite interest takes the place of passion: a blanc de blanc (however good the vintage) is insufficient lubricant for a rollicking argument about line-out tactics; worst of all, there's that damned English sportsmanship. "My dear fellow," said the member. "Scotland positively deserve to win. They're playing far better than us. Jolly good luck to them." Nothing more irritates a Scot than to be subjected by an Englishman to generosity, encouragement and self-deprecation.

These are not, I have to say, virtues that will be readily on display in the pubs of Edinburgh this morning. The notion of extending the hand of good fortune to the English is almost impossible to contemplate in a city where T-shirts are on sale which bear the slogan "I support Scotland — or anyone playing England". One national newspaper will publish a 24-page supplement to mark the confrontation. Victory will signal an orgy of celebration. Defeat is unimaginable: this is the ultimate confrontation with the auld enemy.

Sporting battles are not always the best indicators of the state of a nation. Triumph on the terraces, the full-throated chanting of a jingoistic national anthem, rarely translate directly into political action, as Jim Sillars discovered when he lost his Scottish Nationalist seat in 1992 and accused his erstwhile supporters of being "ninety-minute patriots". The great majority of Scots enjoy a perfectly easy-going relationship with the English. But on the fringes there does seem to be a growing edge to national attitudes, a hostility which is meaner and less forgiving than is consistent with good neighbourliness.

An English friend, who has lived in Scotland since the 1960s, tells me he has encountered more aggression and resentment in the past few years than he has at any time since he first arrived. An English journalist, writing in one of the Scottish Sunday papers last weekend, complained about a "neighbourly distrust, resentment, and dislike that, on occasions, verges disturbingly on the paranoid". There have been angry letters recently about the rising proportion of English students in Scottish universities. The vociferous backing given by Scots fans to foreign teams playing against England in both the football and rugby World Cups (even to the extent of donning the rivals' colours), contrasted shamefully with the generous support offered by England for the Scots.

This is, of course, part of the heritage of a small nation with a long history of asserting itself against a powerful neighbour. John Buchan recalled a childhood in which such prejudices were nurtured. "Brooding over Scottish history made

us intense patriots of the narrowest school," he wrote. "Against our little land there had always stood England, vast, menacing and cruel... We early decided that no Englishman could enter Heaven." And Robert Louis Stevenson, in *Weir of Hermiston*, observed memorably: "For that is the mark of the Scot of all classes: that he stands in an attitude towards the past unthinkable to Englishmen, and remembers and cherishes the memory of his forebears, good or bad, and there burns in him a sense of identity with the dead even to the twentieth generation."

That identity rarely comes into sharper focus than when juxtaposed with England. The speaker on *Thought for the Day* yesterday who said that nationhood had nothing to do with anti-Englishness but was, rather, "a celebration", should spend a little time in Princes Street this afternoon. What he would find is Scottish nationalism measuring itself against an English scale and sometimes finding itself wanting. Because England is bigger, wealthier and more powerful, the result can be defiance — or awe. Attitudes hardened distinctly during Margaret Thatcher's period of government, and have shown little sign of softening since. Her strident Englishness and her assertion that she knew what was best for the Scots led to a growing sense of frustration. The results of successive elections, in which

Scots voted consistently for one form of government, only to be landed with another, did little to help.

It was not ever thus. In the 19th century, a self-confident Scotland with a booming economy, building an Empire "with a little help from the English" as one contemporary boasted, and enjoying a surprisingly healthy measure of devolved government, regarded itself as being on more or less equal terms with its southerly neighbour. Writers like Scott and Stevenson, fully aware of their nationality, nevertheless felt no embarrassment about being called "English". It was assumed that the natural self-confidence of the Scot abroad would always take him to the top. There are few more impressive sights," observed J.M. Barrie, "than a Scotsman on the make."

It would be nice to think that Scotland could, sometime, revert to the state of relaxed self-confidence it enjoyed then. Resentment and envy are undignified emotions for a grown-up nation; it could do with a stronger streak of generosity than it currently displays. One of the arguments for political autonomy, in my view, is that it would give the Scottish people a greater sense of self-reliance and of being on a more even footing with the English. And that would reduce the sense of inferiority behind so many Scottish attitudes.

That, however, will have to wait. For it is my deep conviction that we will, this afternoon, give those self-satisfied English hoodlums the thrashing of their lives.

Major's meeting with Li Peng shows Britain is a spent force in Hong Kong, says Jonathan Mirsky

The lion lies down with the dragon

Today is the first time since 1991 that John Major has come to Hong Kong straight from a meeting with the Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng, and in neither case was he trailing clouds of glory. The photographs of him and Mr Li in Bangkok on Thursday night wearing their new lustrous Thai-silk shirts, and Mr Major's rally-the-troops tone after their hour together cannot hide the truth from Hong Kong: Britain is a spent force here.

It is often said that on July 1, 1997 very little will change in Hong Kong. Handover ceremonies apart, one would hardly notice. This is cant. On that day there will be a political and social earthquake in Hong Kong which in other places would mark a revolution. After the People's Liberation Army takes over the garrison, China's governor and his inner cabinet will succeed Chris Patten and his: the first wholly elected Legislative Council will be dissolved; the Bill of Rights will be neutered; and supreme legal power on "matters of state" will move to Peking.

Mr Major said in Bangkok that his meeting with Mr Li was more satisfactory than the last. What can have satisfied him?

In September 1991, to reporters on

his plane bound for America, Russia and China, Mr Major, then also facing an uncertain election, still looked like a world statesman. In Moscow, he was the first Western leader to meet Mikhail Gorbachev after the unsuccessful coup. The Peking leg of the trip was a humiliation. There, too, the Prime Minister was first on the scene — after the Tiananmen Square killings. He had been manoeuvred into it by the wily Li Peng, who craved international respectability.

The bait was the new Hong Kong airport. Since 1989 the Chinese, furious with Britain's condemnation of Tiananmen, refused to approve its construction, even though they would eventually get a brand new airport, free. Mr Li let it be known that if the Prime Minister himself came to

Peking, a memorandum of understanding would be signed by them both — normally a task for junior ministers. Mr Major went, signed, and banged the table a bit about human rights. I asked him if he had been wearing his third-best suit as he was escorted by the smirking Mr Li. He replied, "Ah, you noticed."

Last Thursday night Mr Major once again had a fruitless time with Mr Li. He said he had sensed positive atmospheres but conceded that on the Legislative Council, the Bill of Rights, and human rights generally no agreement was possible. He urged Mr Li to restore confidence in Hong Kong, and may even have warned him that 500,000 more people are prepared to leave. But only a retention of the city's

present partial democracy would truly reassure, and such an appeal would not have stirred the man who oversaw Tiananmen.

Although Mr Major and Governor Patten are responsible for Hong Kong's wholly elected Legislative Council, on Monday the Prime Minister will meet its members not in a public session but at a private tea party in Government House. Nothing could lose him more face.

passports and visas for Hong Kong people who want to leave in 1997, including non-Chinese residents.

This trip will have done neither Hong Kong nor the Prime Minister much good. But there is another dimension which in the long run holds hope for Hong Kong. Before long this British Prime Minister may well lose an election. But as Mr and Mrs Major slip away, a new premier will move in. Labour ministers will enter their offices, where civil servants will tell them some of what they need to know. Britain will have voted for this and will know what to expect.

In Peking, Li Peng, too, is an unpopular prime minister, but for wholly different reasons: he was at Deng Xiaoping's right hand during the 1989 killings. There, by contrast, the medium-term future is unknowable. Crime is rampant, and official corruption so pervasive that Mr Li has warned that it could bring down the Communist Party.

Everything waits. No one knows what will happen when Deng Xiaoping "goes to see Marx". Not five minutes later, or five months, or five years. But Mr Major will live to see the party, whose power is already being eroded, either sink or be swept away. That is Hong Kong's hope.

Voyage of the Vikings

Authentication of the Vinland map vindicates Leif Ericsson

Who really discovered America? We need to know because money is involved. Under American law, anybody who can prove he or she is one-tenth descended from the Eskimos who trekked through the Edmonson gap ten millennia before Christ can build a tax-free casino in Connecticut and become a millionaire. Political rectitude declares this compensation for the fact that anyone with title to property in Manhattan once seized by 16th-century Dutch settlers can become Donald Trump. Who says history is bunk?

For many years this has left Leif Ericsson out in the cold. Son of Eric the Red, a Viking fugitive from Icelandic justice, Leif has reasonable claim to have beaten Columbus to be Europe's first "discoverer" of America. His excavated settlement of AD 1001 at L'Anse aux Meadows in Newfoundland will in five years have Norwegian nationalists celebrating in style. (The claim of Leif's precursor, Bjarni Herjólfsson, is moot: the saga of his earlier sighting of Canada makes no mention of a landing, although he told Leif of his discovery and sold him his longboat.) Leif's Vinland colony survived for two decades. Eskimo attacks, feuds and the onset of a mini ice-age forced its abandonment.

This has never qualified as "discovery" because no permanent colony was settled. There was no documented map and Viking public relations at the time were deplorable. Although a Bremen monk named Adam mentioned Vinland in a manuscript of 1070, his source was presumably the gossip of sea captains. To the American historian of exploration, Daniel Boorstin, Leif's colonists showed "physical but not spiritual courage. What they did in America did not change their own or anybody else's view of the world". Their astonishing voyages made no difference. To Boorstin, as to Renaissance Europe, it was Columbus not Ericsson who lit a candle over the Americas. Vikings, with their pagan gods and dreadful table manners, did not count.

Yet there was a map, and this month we are told it is authentic. In 1965 a "Vinland Map" arrived on the art market, apparently dated to half a century before Columbus. It showed a large island to the west of Greenland with inlets similar to those of Newfoundland, marked Vinlandia Insula. The map, apparently drawn in Basile in about 1440, was bought and donated to Yale University. Its



The Vinland map, from *The Vinland Map and the Tartar Relation* by R.A. Skelton, Thomas E. Marston and George D. Painter (Yale)

provenance, said to be a Spanish monastery, was obscure. The American dealer's source died suddenly of a heart attack in 1968 before he could reveal what had been an oath of secrecy as to the previous owner.

This was suspicious. Worse was to come. Analysis by Chicago chemists declared the presence of titanium dioxide in the map's ink. This was claimed to indicate 20th-century ink. Though the parchment might be medieval, the map was a fake. The four original experts, two from the British Museum, who had authenticated the map were dumbfounded. The Vinland map seemed the cartographic equivalent of van Meegeren's Vermeer forgeries. Three of the four experts subsequently died. Leif Ericsson returned to the sagas.

Last month, the map was scientifically reinstated by the authorities at Yale. To the sole survivor of the four experts, the British Museum's George Painter, the Chicago discrediting of the Vinland map was nothing less than a "miscarriage of justice". More scientists have subjected the map to re-examination in a cyclotron, firing proton beams at it to yield precise X-ray measurements of its chemical particles. This has revealed that the amount of titanium in the ink is no different from that present naturally in other 15th-century inks.

Yale is now confident enough to republish the Vinland map, with an analysis of the controversy, in a new volume out this month. It is a masterly colloquium of the sciences — of geography, chemistry, linguistics, navigation, bibliography, even criminal detection — in pursuit of a single intellectual endeavour.

To George Painter, the new evidence unequivocally validates the map as "a major and authentic message from the Middle Ages on a hitherto unknown moment in the history of the world... It is a true voice from the past". The Vikings' claim not just to have reached America first but to have "discovered" it and disseminated the knowledge is now validated by more than the Norse sagas. As the book claims, Leif's expedition and its recording in map form "bridges the gap between two epochs of Atlantic discovery".

The Vinland map is a saga in its own right. It shows how temporary are the "proofs" of formal science. It shows the judgments of historians as of no account when a chemist with a test-tube says "it cannot be", only to be countered by a physicist with a cyclotron who says "yes it can". The

saga also illustrates the long academic neglect of medieval Northern Europe. Vinland has always been a problem for Columbus enthusiasts. Their hero meant to reach China and believed he had. He took Chinese interpreters on his expeditions and sent them inland in Cuba to interview the Great Khan. He died convinced that Cuba was in the East Indies. Yet he did not "discover" a new continent. He bumped into the Caribbean islands on his way somewhere else.

Leif Ericsson discovered Labrador and Newfoundland after being told of land west of Greenland by have been familiar on the quays of Bristol long before Columbus. In taking his northern route to China, Cabot was not sailing blind. He was heading for an already discovered land. His landfall was to be the Norse America. As the 19th-century explorer Nansen said, the Vikings had set out "with conscious purpose... and had found land on the other side." This was true discovery. The authentication of the Vinland map is a thrilling moment in the history of geography.

If my name was Ericsson I would hoof it to Newfoundland and seek a gaming licence right away.

to the west of Ireland. It was their enterprise that persuaded the Venetian John Cabot to make Bristol his base for seeking a north-west passage to China in 1497.

When this "British Columbus" reached Newfoundland, he believed it was the same "mainland" said to have been seen by previous Bristol navigators. Recent documents suggest that Columbus knew of Bristol's discovery of a North Atlantic mainland before he set sail, as he may even have known of Vinland during a reputed visit to Iceland in 1477. But he was off to China.

The authors of the new edition show how wide was the likely knowledge of Leif Ericsson's discovery in medieval North Europe. If that knowledge could reach a Basile cartographer in the 1440s, it would have been familiar on the quays of Bristol long before Columbus. In taking his northern route to China, Cabot was not sailing blind. He was heading for an already discovered land. His landfall was to be the Norse America. As the 19th-century explorer Nansen said, the Vikings had set out "with conscious purpose... and had found land on the other side." This was true discovery. The authentication of the Vinland map is a thrilling moment in the history of geography.

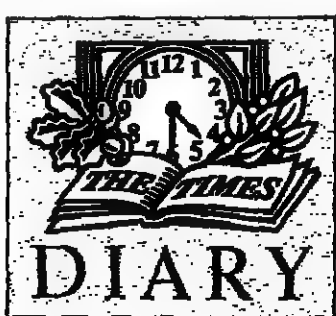
In the frame

AS TELEVISION companies grapple for an interview given by James "the Cad" Hewitt about his relationship with the Princess of Wales, I have disturbing news about the cameraman behind the escapade.

This is not his first royal adventure. Some ten years ago, Sebastian Rich, then at ITN, was told to make a fly-on-the-wall documentary about the Prince and Princess of Wales. *In Public in Private*.

The first location was Kensington Palace, where he contrived to portray the young Prince as "normal children, fighting, tantrums — the lot". Within moments, he got what he was after. "I was filming Prince Harry playing with some toy cars on the floor when I became aware of a constant tugging at my ankle. It was becoming distracting to the point of annoyance," he explains in his book *People I Have Shot*.

"I left the camera running on my shoulder and peeped behind me to see Prince William running a toy car up and down my trousers. Without thinking, I removed the future King of England from my leg with a small cuff on the



bottom." He says he was relieved not to have been sent to the Tower; but this latest project may yet see him incarcerated.

Weak hand

GIN AND TONICS were at half mast at bridge tables throughout the land as a mark of respect for the late Duke of Atholl, who was buried yesterday. The duke was, by all accounts, the most formidable captain yet of the Lords bridge team, with a tenure of more than 15 years.

His absence will be felt the more keenly after the death last August

of Lord Lever, another respected player. The Commons team must now be in the ascendancy, but their lordships still have a trick up their sleeves in the professional bridge coach Marie-Thérèse Hill. "Their weakness tends to be bidding," she says firmly, "and I try to teach them the Stayman, the 'unusual no-trump' and the 'weak no-trump' techniques."

Right face

WHEN it comes to staff recruitment for the Millennium Exhibition at Greenwich, I trust the process will pay attention to the politically correct mantra of the present day.

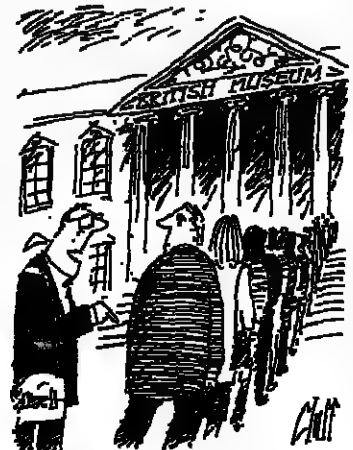
A memo dated 1951 reveals that the museum entertained a beauty parade as the best means of recruitment. "A pretty face always provokes a smile," it says. "It is a great fallacy to think, as many foreigners do, that British women are plain but sensible." The organisers had a certain type in mind. "It would be infinitely preferable to employ the cast of a Hollywood musical rather than a representative selection of Paris Metro ticket collectors."

● Wild excitement has hit Eaton Square, where the Duke of West-

minster and Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber have their London homes. The rumour is that a member of the Rothschild family has agreed to pay £11 million for a house, which would make it the most expensive sold in London this year.

Speak up

JOHN MAJOR may have picked up a useful tip for the Speaker, Betty Boothroyd, during his trip to Bangkok. The Thai parliament, fed



"Is this the queue to see the Millennium Fund cheque?"

up with politicians going to sleep on its benches, has installed uncomfortable, low-backed chairs to discourage the somnolent.

The new hydraulic chairs have only just been tried out, but already there are complaints concerning the absence of neck support.

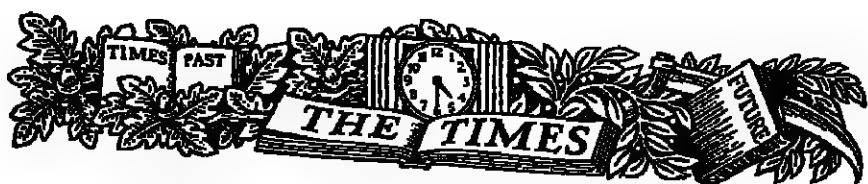
Lang signs

NOBODY could have been more excited at the London Fashion Show at the Natural History Museum on Thursday night than the President of the Board of Trade, Ian Lang. He looked like a schoolboy with a pocket full of tuck after leaving the Scott Report behind for the joy of the catwalk.

He was accompanied in the audience by his younger daughter, Lucy — his elder daughter, Venetia, was working backstage as a stylist for the flamboyant milliner Phillip Treacy. And at odd intervals, when a fetching model came by, Lang whipped out his pocket camera like a hardened paparazzo. He was particularly taken by a young lady in the skimpiest of dresses wearing a black and gold tider — the charitable said she was his niece.



The model who took Ian Lang's fancy



FAREWELL TO SHOPPING

The American election enters the wholesale stage

The primary contest in South Carolina today brings to an end one stage of the presidential contest and ushers in a new and dramatically different one. Until now the contenders have dealt with a string of elections in small states spaced out over the better part of a month. In Iowa, New Hampshire, and Arizona, personal campaigning is critical to success. Individuals with limited financial clout and sparse organisational resources, such as Pat Buchanan, can compensate by personal charisma, the exploitation of local political peculiarities, and assured attention from the local and national media.

This "retail politics", as Americans know it, has many charms — for voters, journalists and the owners of the shopping malls where so much of the trade takes place. But the number of delegates so far selected by it is tiny. Its chief purpose is not to decide who will be the nominee but to narrow down an opening field, this year initially nine strong, to a manageable two or three credible contenders. South Carolina will complete that process. If Lamar Alexander fails to win here in his native South, his candidacy is unlikely to survive another week. If Pat Buchanan falls short in this state with a strong social conservative constituency, then his too will be implausible — despite his victory in New Hampshire.

As of next week the campaign consists almost exclusively of much larger states voting in clusters. It goes wholesale. Over two hundred delegates will be decided on Tuesday alone with a further 105 at stake in New York on Thursday. This pattern will continue via the South and Mid-West until March 26, when California — with ten per cent of the total at stake — should confirm the victorious candidate.

This new phase of the campaign cycle favours those with famous names, strong organisation and deep financial coffers. The Senate Majority Leader, Robert Dole, is the

obvious beneficiary from such changed terrain but the mercurial publisher, Steve Forbes, will test how far a personal fortune and the flat tax idea can challenge that. Unless there is a striking result in South Carolina, it is unlikely that any other man can hope to rival these two.

This election is fought in even more challenging circumstances than usual. The decision of California legislators to move their primary from its traditional berth in June to late March prompted a stampede by other states towards the front of the electoral calendar. That concentrated the Republican battle into a brief eight-week affair. Following this, though, is a further curiosity. The Republican Convention, which would normally have occurred in mid-July, has been moved to mid-August in an unprecedented move to avoid clashing for television and press attention with the Olympic Games that month in Atlanta.

This could cause real upset and inconvenience. Senator Dole, unlike Steve Forbes, has agreed to restrictions on his spending before that Convention and is fast approaching the \$30 million ceiling. Meanwhile President Clinton, despite having no opposition in the Democratic Party primaries, is allowed to spend an equal amount leisurely over the next six months. Whoever emerges as the Republican candidate, probably Bob Dole, will have to find cheap forms of self-publicity between April and August.

To those Americans who prefer the language of Olympics to that of politics, the Republican nomination in 1996 has consisted of a long warm-up, varying hurdles, a sprint starting on Tuesday, a marathon until the convention, followed by a middle distance contest afterwards. American elections are a trial of endurance, a political pentathlon. And there is still little sign among the Republicans of what the chosen athlete will do with the torch.

IT'S A LOTTERY

The grant-giving can afford to become more flexible

For what we are about to receive, may the country be truly grateful. In two individual acts of bounteous philanthropy, the British Museum is to be given millions of pounds towards matching its Millennium Commission grant to redevelop its inner courtyard. Walter Annenberg, the former American Ambassador to Britain, is offering £6 million of his own money, and £4 million will come from the Sainsbury family. The Sainsbury's generosity is well appreciated; and Ambassador Annenberg has already won an honorary knighthood. He has given large sums to the National Gallery and to the restoration of St Paul's Cathedral.

But while these seem, and are, large sums of money, they do not begin to fulfil the British Museum's needs for its £72 million project. £30 million of which will come from the Millennium Commission. For no lottery funds come without strings. All grants have to be matched, to a greater or lesser degree, by money from elsewhere. The pot of philanthropy is only moderately flexible; the demands upon it are growing fast.

All the bodies that disburse lottery money, apart from the charities board, demand matching funding of between 10 per cent and 50 per cent of the cost of the project. This sounded quite sensible when it was first mooted. The principle was that if a project could not win support from its local community, then it did not deserve to be built. But in the rush to have developments completed by the year 2000, there is a danger of the country, and particularly London, being littered by half-finished, bankrupt building sites.

Local projects can often be half-financed locally. Councils are reasonably generous: Birmingham offered £50 million towards the city's millennium exhibition bid. But the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts (ABSA) estimates that London alone

will need £400 million of matching funding for all its projects, including the Royal Opera House, the Bankside Tate, Sadler's Wells, the British Museum, Kew Gardens and the Greenwich Millennium exhibition. Other highly deserving causes include a new education centre for conservation techniques at London Zoo. With no Greater London Council, the chances of local authority cash are small. Where is the money to come from?

Not from the private sector alone. British Telecom is the biggest sponsor of the arts in this country: it spends £1.8 million a year. Most companies would prefer to sponsor individual exhibitions or productions than to put money into a building project over which they have little control or sense of ownership. Trusts give a few million pounds a year each; but the total can surely not approach the amount needed.

So far, few are panicking. Only Sadler's Wells has admitted that it might struggle to meet its target. But there are ominously many development directors who claim to be "quietly confident" that they will reach their targets in order not to frighten the grant-giving authorities. This money will not materialise out of the air. There will undoubtedly be a crunch sometime in the next few years.

The lottery bodies would do better to anticipate this than to wait until their sponsored projects are on the brink of collapse. Already the system is a victim of its own success. The lottery has raised more money than expected, which has made more available for grants. But that in itself has made the matching funding requirements all the more onerous to meet. If the lottery continues to be as profitable as it is now for good causes, the grant bodies will be able to afford to be more flexible. Matching funding is a good idea in principle. It is beginning to break down in practice.

FRENCH POLISH

Flat-pack furniture is the popular new republican assembly

Our Business News reports today that MFI is doing brisk business in France. Here at home the furniture trade may be in the basement with the housing market; but our masters of cheap and cheerful flat-pack furniture, sold by mail order and delivered with testing instructions and the corners occasionally rounded, have built a market across the Channel. Though stagnant in the UK, MFI's sales are up by 26 per cent in France.

Protectors of French spelling can happily Frenchify MFI's initials, the origins of which are lost in the plasterboard of time, to *émfié*. But will they also be able to translate the Anglo-Saxon cries of the householder with reassembly rage? The DIY furniture people can respell *la ouigette* and *le scri-driver* and *esprit de corps* (Superglue) for their French customers. But will they have the word for the bit that is left over after the *meuble* has been assembled? *C'est un* doddle perhaps?

MFI's invasion of the French market is a triumph for British enterprise. But this triumph for British enterprise also challenges the old British inferiority complex about French sophistication and chic. In some of their pretensions, under that irritating Gallic veneer, the French turn out to be no better than we are. Their favourite names are not François and René but Kevin and Gary. Their typical breakfast is not *pain*

au chocolat but *huit heures bis*. Woolworths has recently joined up with Darty to offer the French our native British pleasures of "pick 'n' mix". Liquorice Allsorts with humbugs. And the French passion for tartan is not clannish but populist, with patterns and fabrics and low prices that would astonish the kiln-makers of Edinburgh.

Sliced bread and instant coffee have become more convenient for French breakfasters than baguettes and *café au lait*. When French Ministers of Culture honour foreign film stars they go for the most demotic celebrities. Among the latest recipients of the French Order of Arts and Letters have been Sylvester Stallone (famous for his pect not his circumflex), Sharon Stone (famous for crossing her legs), and the unequivocally and deliberately ordinary Kevin Costner.

The flip side of this French taste for the ordinary things of Anglo Saxon life is that they export Seines of Piat D'Or to our supermarkets, but would not dream of drinking it themselves. But in all other tastes including their furniture, the French are not as *très snob* as they pretend. Their tower block jungles are to British housing estates as Marseille to Versailles. And now their furniture comes from MFI. The question is: does it last as long as that popular Parisian snack, *le M & S prawn sandwich*?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Misplaced secrecy on sale of arms

From Ms Jill Morrell and others

Sir, Interviewed on *Newsnight* on February 26, the President of the Board of Trade, Ian Lang, invoked the suffering of the hostages held in Lebanon in the late 1980s as a reason for not informing Parliament about the sale of arms-manufacturing equipment to Iraq.

If public knowledge about the sales was deemed to be harmful to hostages held by Iranian-backed groups, why did the Government place their citizens in jeopardy in the first place by allowing those sales?

While the hostages were imprisoned in Lebanon the British Government claimed repeatedly in public that its attitude towards relations with Iran and Iraq was of a superior moral nature. It claimed to have adopted a neutral stance in the Iran-Iraq war, and maintained that Britain alone stood firm against doing deals to facilitate the hostages' release. Even talking to the Government of Iran was eschewed on these grounds. It is profoundly depressing to discover that all along it was business as usual, and that sales of arms-manufacturing equipment to Iraq were the predominant concern.

During discussions between the families and friends of the hostages and Foreign Office representatives, the Foreign Secretary at the time, Sir Geoffrey Howe, and his Foreign Minister, William Waldegrave, became angry at suggestions that they could be doing more to win the hostages' freedom.

Had the hostages' families and the British public been aware of our Government's tilt in favour of Iraq, the Foreign Secretary's reluctance to talk to the Iranians and the Iranians' reluctance to talk to the British Government would have been more clearly explained. The families would have suggested that favouring Iraq over Iran was placing the hostages in greater danger. On *Newsnight* Mr Lang made it plain that this was indeed the case.

For Mr Lang to claim moral justification for not fully disclosing the Government's policies towards Iraq, out of concern for the hostages in Lebanon, is ludicrous. The British Government's policy placed the hostages in jeopardy, not simply public disclosure of the situation. Mr Lang's claim is disingenuous, misleading and offensive.

Yours etc,

JILL MORRELL,

BRIAN KEENAN,

JOHN MCCARTHY,

TERENCE MCCARTHY,

CHRIS PEARSON (President,

Friends of John McCarthy),

c/o Peters, Fraser and Dunlop,

503-4 The Chambers,

Lois Road, SW10,

February 27.

Scott confirms

From Mr Peter V. Facey

Sir, The Scott inquiry showed that when the defence asks for government documents to assist its case the person who inspects those documents to see if they are relevant is the prosecution counsel. The prosecution, of course, has a duty to disclose unused material to the defence, but it does not follow that the prosecution should be involved in attempts by the defence to acquire other material, never considered by the prosecution, which happens to be held by Government.

In the Matrix Churchill case Scott found that the prosecution counsel "concentrated over much on the damage the documents might do to the prosecution case, rather than on their potential value to the defence" (G18.41). In the Ordix case, Scott found that the prosecution counsel had a "responsibility to satisfy himself that adequate steps had been taken by Customs to identify documents... relevant to the defence" and that counsel "failed to discharge that responsibility" (J6.54).

One lawyer cannot serve two masters, and civilised societies the world over believe that there must be separate defence and prosecution counsels. Yet British practice violates this requirement because of a failure properly to distinguish between the role of the State as Crown prosecutor and its role as guardian of possibly secret documents.

Scott recognised this in part when he recommended that where the State is seeking to assert public interest immunity in court it should not be represented by prosecution counsel (K6.20). But he didn't go far enough, since PII does not arise unless documents are deemed to be relevant. Justice requires that the prosecution counsel should not be in any way involved in attempts by the defence to obtain government documents (other than unused prosecution material).

Yours faithfully,

P. V. FACEY,

Merry Trees, Hangersley Hill,

Ringwood, Hampshire,

February 28.

From Mr John Paxton

Sir, Imagine what the arrogance of the Government would have been over the Scott report if it had had a comfortable majority in the House.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN PAXTON,

Moss Cottage,

Hardway, Nr Bruton, Somerset,

February 26.

Twists but no regret in royal divorce

From the Reverend Christopher Fenton

Sir, Amid all the hand-wringing and rubbing of hands which you report (February 29) as greeting the final twists and turns of the royal divorce, it seems to me that one aspect of the matter continually escapes comment: I mean the idea that marriage is never — even for private citizens — exclusively a *private* affair.

The old Prayer Book puts it emphatically when it describes the setting of matrimony as being "in the sight of God and in the face of this congregation". You cannot go much more public than that.

And marriage is a societal event, affecting as it does two separate family networks, a whole gathering of friends and acquaintances, to say nothing of the community and neighbourhood of which this man and this woman, and the children they may beget, are a part.

It is not curious that we have heard so little expression of regret from either party for the failure of a marriage

which was in a very real sense ours as well as theirs?

Yours truly,
CHRISTOPHER FENTON,
The Leys, Aston, Kingsland,
Leominster, Herefordshire,
March 1.

From Mrs Kathleen Griffin

Sir, As a lifelong supporter of the monarchy I was amazed that the Queen, as head of the Church of England, should have urged the Prince of Wales to divorce.

It seems that the Princess has been foolish in some ways but the Buckingham Palace statement that "The Queen was most interested to hear that the Princess of Wales had agreed to a divorce..." contained not one word of sadness or regret and was cold in the extreme. Buckingham Palace has thrown away its best asset.

Yours faithfully,
KATHLEEN GRIFFIN,
13 Brookmead Avenue, Bickley, Kent,
February 29.

Restoring faith in the teaching of RE

From Dr Robert Traer

Sir, On February 23 you reported that the Department of Education does not intend to inspect religious education classes at Birchfield Primary School in Birmingham, where parents may choose instruction in Islam rather than the regular religious education curriculum. Your editorial on the same day, "Islam at school", asserts that the withdrawal of Muslim children from RE "is an unhappy commentary on multifaith teaching and a challenge to the future of our multicultural society".

I believe the initiative taken in Birmingham does call into question the present approach to religious education, but I hardly think it endangers the future of the nation. I am not aware of any evidence that children in a multicultural society, who receive instruction only in their own religious tradition, are less able to get along with their neighbours than those who attend RE.

The crucial question, so long as religious education is mandatory, is whether RE lessons, as you suggest, "cheapen all faiths by vaunting none". This judgment strikes at the very heart of RE, which seeks to foster tolerance by teaching "about religions" rather than offering instruction in a religious faith. If objective teaching "about religions" undermines the faith of one or more of the religious communities in British society, then such a curriculum ought not to be continued.

Given the significance of this question, would it not be wise to urge research into the effects of RE? It may be that there are a variety of models of RE being used in the schools, and that identifying the views of parents with different religious and cultural backgrounds may be helpful in sorting out this issue.

Should teaching "about religions" generally be found wanting, as you suggest, then I believe there are two obvious choices. Education in a religious tradition might be provided in school for parents who choose it, if the religious community provides an instructor, as is being done now at Birchfield Primary School. Or religious instruction might be left to religious communities, as in many other countries.

In either case education in "a pre-

dominantly Christian Britain" need not, as you fear, "neglect its own inheritance". The role of Christian teaching and practice in fostering religious liberty, which you would have all children in Britain understand, can be included in their history and literature lessons.

Yours sincerely,
ROBERT TRAER,
3 Carlton Road, Oxford,
February 23.

From Mrs S. Rose

Sir, You purport to respect all faiths. How? By "strengthening" Christianity in schools. Your tolerance, it seems, only extends to others from a position of presumptuous superiority. As a teacher, I feel it is definitely not my place to assign greater merit to one religion over another. That is, quite properly, up to the conscience of each parent.

I teach my pupils about all the world's faiths. When they leave school I would indeed feel a failure if they were ignorant of Lent, but equally so if they had no idea of the moral, spiritual and cultural significance of Ramadan or Passover or, for that matter, the Aboriginal Dreamtime (or is that too "superstitious" or "Stone Age" to qualify as a religion in your view?).

I worry about the religious ghetto mentality which leads from intolerance to racism. We must prepare our children to co-exist in a world which is culturally and religiously diverse — let's not neglect anyone's inheritance.

Yours faithfully,
SUSANNA ROSE,
22 West End Lane, Pinner, Middlesex,
February 27.

From Mr Robert Ashby

Sir, Your leading article notes the glories of our culture rooted in the two Testaments, via Milton and T. S. Eliot. Let us not forget the secular and non-Christian inspiration drawn on by Hobbes, Hume, Gibbon, Shelley, Byron, George Eliot, Hardy, Forster, Woolf, et al, of whom Britain should be equally proud.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT ASHBY
(Executive Director),
British Humanist Association,
47 Theobald's Road, WC1.

From Mr Ian McDonald

Sir, If it is true that Peter Hobday is being booted off the *Today* programme against his wishes (letters, February 29) the powers behind the scenes had better be warned: I gave up smoking after nearly ten years' addiction and have been free of the weed for almost twenty years now. I am therefore quite capable of giving up *Today*.

All you need to do is listen to the news headlines at 7am and then switch off. There were no withdrawal symptoms this morning: just an unhurried tranquillity and seemingly far more time to get ready for work.

A combination of news headlines and then the more considered analysis and varied articles in *The Times* will make a satisfactory change from an increasingly unsatisfactory *Today* programme.

Yours sincerely,
IAN McDONALD,
Hillview,
The Bank, Biddford-on-Avon,
Aloster, Warwickshire,
February 29.

Paying for opera

From Mr Bryan Marson-Smith

Sir, Bernard Levin ("Come into the Garden", February 23) is of course entitled to his views on prices at Covent Garden; but having seen how the management of the Royal Opera House operates, as shown recently in BBC2's *The House*, I should wish there to be no public money spent on it, whatever the consequences of that might be.

Yours faithfully,
BRYAN MARSON-SMITH,
Fairseat,
Gracious Lane,
Sevenoaks, Kent,
February 26.

Bacon not artist of his 'self-portrait'?

From Mr Richard Shone

Sir, Wide publicity has been given recently to the "discovery" of a so-called self-portrait by Francis Bacon dated to c1930 when the artist was 21 (reports and leading article, February 2). The work in question is currently on view (to March 3) in the Fine Art and Antiques Fair at Olympia (report, *Fine Arts*, February 26).

The Winsor & Newton label on the reverse of the "Rathbone" canvas board on which the work was painted bears the pencil inscription "for Francis Bacon". This could mean either that the work was given to Bacon, perhaps as a portrait of him by a fellow artist; or, as has been claimed, that the note was written by the retailer reserving the board for the painter — something highly unlikely as such boards were widely available and manufactured in their thousands.

On the same label is pencilled the price 1s 6d. A Rathbone board of 16 x 13in (so stamped on the reverse) was not available until 1937 at the earliest. It was priced 1s 4d in the 1938 Winsor & Newton catalogue, thus allowing a reasonable mark-up of tuppence. Therefore this work, whoever it is by, cannot have been painted earlier than 1937.

On stylistic and technical grounds, it is inconceivable that it could have been painted by Bacon after his known works of 1933-36. By dating it to c1930, even the exhibitors concede this. That it is a work from Bacon's hand, as several historians and critics have accepted, is, on the evidence given here, out of the question.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD SHONE,
87 Holbein Place, SW1,
February 28.

Hobby of kings

From Mr Gavin Littaur

Sir, Your leading article on philately (February 26) mentions a stamp collector in 1841.

Dr John E. Gray, Keeper of Natural History at the British Museum, apparently purchased a block of Penny Blacks on May 1, 1840, the first day of issue, and preserved it as a memento. He added to his collection as other stamps were issued and published one of the earliest stamp catalogues in 1863.

The Queen appears not to share her father's and grandfather's zest for philately. Perhaps her disenchantment is due to the ever-increasing proliferation of substandard stamp issues which bear our Sovereign's head.

Yours faithfully,
GAVIN LITTAUR,
24 Stormont Road, Highgate, N6,
February 26.

Brocket title

From Earl Lloyd George of Dwyfor

Sir, In the course of a recent speech in Birmingham attacking the Conservatives as the party of privilege (report, February 14), Mr Tony Blair asserted that "the first Lord Brocket bought the title from Lloyd George".

Leaving aside the intended sneers, Mr Blair's remark is inaccurate. The Brocket peerage was not created until 1933, by which date my grandfather had been out of office for more than ten years.

It is more likely therefore that the person responsible was one of Mr Blair's predecessors as Leader of the Labour Party — to wit, Mr J. Ramsay MacDonald.

Yours sincerely,
LLOYD GEORGE OF DWYFOR,
House of Lords.

Many thanks

From Mr Fred Mann

Sir, To extract a letter of thanks (letters, February 16, 20, 23, 24, 28), one could follow the example of Andrew Carnegie, as recounted in Joseph Frazer Wall's 1970 biography.

When his sister-in-law complained to him that her son, his namesake, never wrote to her while he was away at college, Mr Carnegie confidently bet her ten dollars that he could get an answer by return mail.

The wager was accepted, and Mr Carnegie sat down and wrote a newsy letter to young Andrew, ending with a postscript that he was enclosing a \$10 bill as a little gift. But he deliberately omitted to enclose the money.

Within two days there was a letter of thanks — pointing out Mr Carnegie's "mistake". This was of course rectified with the winnings from the bet.

Yours sincerely,
FRED MANN,
13 Park Place, Dunfermline, Fife,
February 26.

It just seems like it?

From Mr Frank Lewis

Sir, It is not surprising that Mrs Pavarotti should be getting a little weary of her husband's activities. After all, according to your report (February 29), she has been married to him for five years longer than he has to her.

Yours faithfully,
FRANK LEWIS,
Mallans, Main Road,
Sundridge, Sevenoaks, Kent,
February 29.

NEWS

Clinton gives Adams visa

■ The Clinton Administration granted Gerry Adams a visa but immediately put pressure on the Sinn Féin leader by insisting he would not be attending any meetings at the White House unless the IRA declared a ceasefire. Mr Adams will be allowed to visit for St Patrick's Day but he will face tighter restrictions than when he was able to raise funds for Sinn Féin last year. Page 1

Shadow minister says Prince 'unfit'

■ Ronald Davies, the Shadow Welsh Secretary, was at the centre of a political storm after claiming that the Prince of Wales was unfit to be king. Mr Davies, MP for Caerphilly, said that the breakdown of the Prince's marriage and his hypocrisy over wildlife disqualified him from succeeding. Pages 1, 7

Mother recovers

A woman who was in a coma for ten days after suffering a rare life-threatening condition awoke to be told she had given birth to a healthy boy. Page 1

Businessman barred

A British businessman suspected of spying was barred from Russia for the second time in seven years. Page 1

Underwater eyes

Customs officers are deploying robot submarines to stay one step ahead of the drug barons. Page 1

Mackay's battle

Lord Mackay is facing a bloody battle in the Commons over his refusal to accept the splitting of pensions on divorce. Page 2

Parents to sue

The parents of a teenager who died during a routine cosmetic operation to have her ears pinned back are to sue the hospital where their daughter died. Page 3

£30 million for British Museum piazza

■ The British Museum was awarded £30 million by the Millennium Commission to transform the two-acre courtyard encircling its Round Reading Room into an indoor piazza with restaurants. A further £6 million has been given by Walter Annenberg, a former American ambassador to Britain. Page 4

CS sprays for police

Police in England and Wales went on patrol armed with CS gas sprays in spite of warnings about possible health risks. Page 5

Kew strike

For the first time since their creation in 1759 the Royal Botanic Gardens face a strike. Page 6

Army anger over TV

Military chiefs have been angered by a TV documentary series about the SAS, in which former members take part in reconstructions of missions. Page 9

Human rights ignored

European leaders were moving away from a confrontation over human rights in an attempt to ensure that the first Asia-Europe summit is successful. Page 13

Keating trails

Australians have turned on Paul Keating, their Prime Minister, and are poised to shun Labor in today's general election. Page 14

NATURE NOTES



OPINION

Farewell to shopping: The primary in South Carolina ends one stage of the contest and ushers in a dramatically different one. Page 23

It's a lottery: If the lottery continues to be as profitable as it is now for good causes, the grant bodies will be able to be more flexible. Page 23

French polish: In their tastes, including their furniture, the French are not as *très snob* as pretended. Page 23

LETTERS

Royal divorce: Jill Morrell on arms sales. Page 23

COLUMNS

Simon Jenkins: The Vikings' claim not just to have reached America but to have "discovered" it and disseminated the knowledge is now validated by more than sagas. Page 22

Magnus Lindaker: Nothing more irritates a Scot than to be subjected by an Englishman to generosity and self-deprecation. Page 22

OBITUARIES

Lydia Chukovskaya, writer: The Earl of Stair, Charles McCordale, art historian: Giasandrea Gavazzeni, conductor. Page 25

BUSINESS

Lord Young of Graffham, the former Cabinet minister who was ousted in November as chairman of Cable & Wireless, is close to agreeing a £24 million pay-off. Page 27

Housing: More evidence emerged of a fragile recovery when the Nationwide reported a 0.9 per cent rise in its seasonally adjusted house price index. Page 27

Markets: The FT-SE 100 Index rose 25.1 to 3752.7. Sterling rose from 83.5 to 83.6 after a fall from \$1.5312 to \$1.5282 but a rise from DM2.2501 to DM2.2538. Page 30

ARTS

Top score: "The public is more aware of fourth-rate novelists and sculptors than top-class composers," says Richard Morrison. Page 19

Russian red nose: Some claim that Slava Polunin is the world's greatest clown. Now he has made England his base. Page 21

Miles and Gile: One of the great jazz partnerships will be recalled by the London Sinfonietta. Page 21

CAR

Female Jaguar: A 160mph animal designed for women

SPORT

Rugby union: England will need to muster both physical and mental determination to stop the Scots securing the grand slam. Pages 50-52

Crickets: Australia beat Zimbabwe by eight wickets in the World Cup to stay as favourites. United Arab Emirates gained their first win, against Holland. Page 46

Racing: Adrian Maguire and Norman Williamson have been ruled out of National Hunt's Cheltenham Festival. Page 52

SECTIONS

Free spirit: Burma's democratic voice criticises Britain's attitude. Page 10
Fallen idol: Disgrace of a black policeman. Page 18

WEEKEND

Graphic: Times young cartoonists awards. Page 13



Books: Palace secrecy and new novels. Pages 10, 11
Travel: Britain: cruising Africa: skiing. Pages 16-23

10 15

Dress: What do, clothes say about you? Page 1
Win: Tickets: CD store trainers. Page 1

VISION



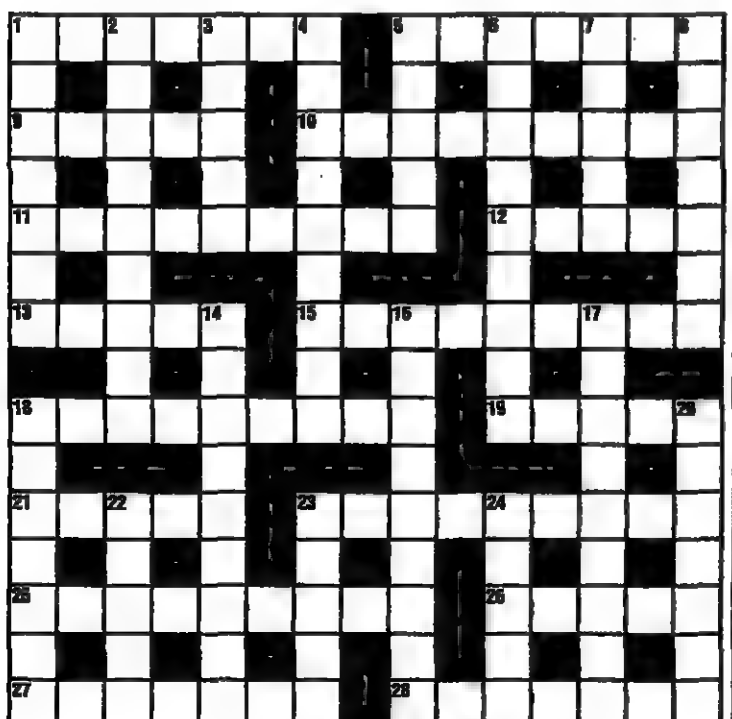
Mistresses: Antonia & Sancha and Bienvenida Buck. Thursday, BBC1
Film: *Singin' in the Rain*. Saturday, BBC2

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,105



A limited edition, 1970 vintage bottle of Aberlour single malt whisky, the only malt whisky to have twice won the prestigious Gold Medal and Pot Still Trophy at the International Wine & Spirit Competition, will be given for the first five correct solutions opened next Thursday. Entries should be addressed to: The Times, Saturday Crossword Competition, PO Box 486, Virginia Street, London E1 9DD. The winners and solution will be published next Saturday.

Name/Address



- ACROSS
- Cook's vessel? Yes and no (7).
 - One of New York's victims in port of New York (7).
 - As used by Virgil, at inordinate length? (5).
 - Quickly stop a learner entering the lounge (6,3).
 - Coming together to study with classes (9).
 - Painter might go round this class and scoff (5).
 - Stoop to hear foreigner (5).
 - Deeply impressed in reading novel (9).
 - Publication like *The Observer*? (9).
 - Powerful Indian's catch secures a wicket (5).
 - Hedda losing her head? Not as weak as that (5).
 - Poor, Gaelic, unknown women, supposedly (6,3).
 - It's used finally to make attic outstanding (3,6).
 - Good with an old instrument (5).
 - Visibly astonished as father gets inspected (3,4).
 - Used references from a thick back edition (7).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,099

NORTHANDSOUTH
I A E T R S
G A R G A N T U A
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D O T H E B O Y S H A L L

- DOWN
- Cut around page that is interrupted (7).
 - Lengthy repairs to Exit Seven (9).
 - Fruit gives person energy (5).
 - Check exercise in relaxation (9).
 - Show fault in endless trust (5).
 - Fare on train revealing natural hierarchy (4,5).
 - This walk, between two rivers, would do for walker (5).
 - Nothing deters fluctuation in magnetic measurement (7).
 - Sick aunt has to get better, of course (9).
 - Rebels' character (with name for being enormous) (9).
 - Points to stall as place for daily provision (4,5).
 - Celebrated ram made to get to work (5,2).
 - Appropriate timber for a spar? (7).
 - Credulously take a worthless purchase, under a pound (3,2).
 - Carried on receiving pay (5).
 - Throw out Peel's reform without vote (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,104

COOPEO HIFELASK
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TIMES WEATHERCAL

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Devon & Cornwall 704
East of England 705
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WEEKEND

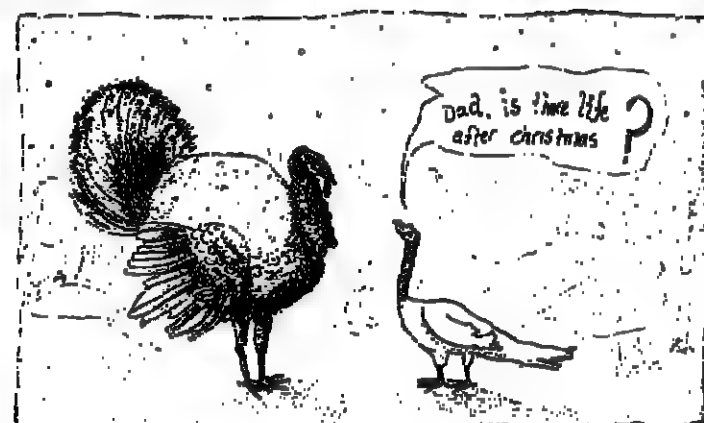
THE TIMES SATURDAY MARCH 2 1996

THE TIMES YOUNG CARTOONISTS OF THE YEAR

TURN TO PAGE 3



JONATHAN CUSICK, 17, from Tamworth, Staffordshire.
First prize (under 30) and Overall Winner



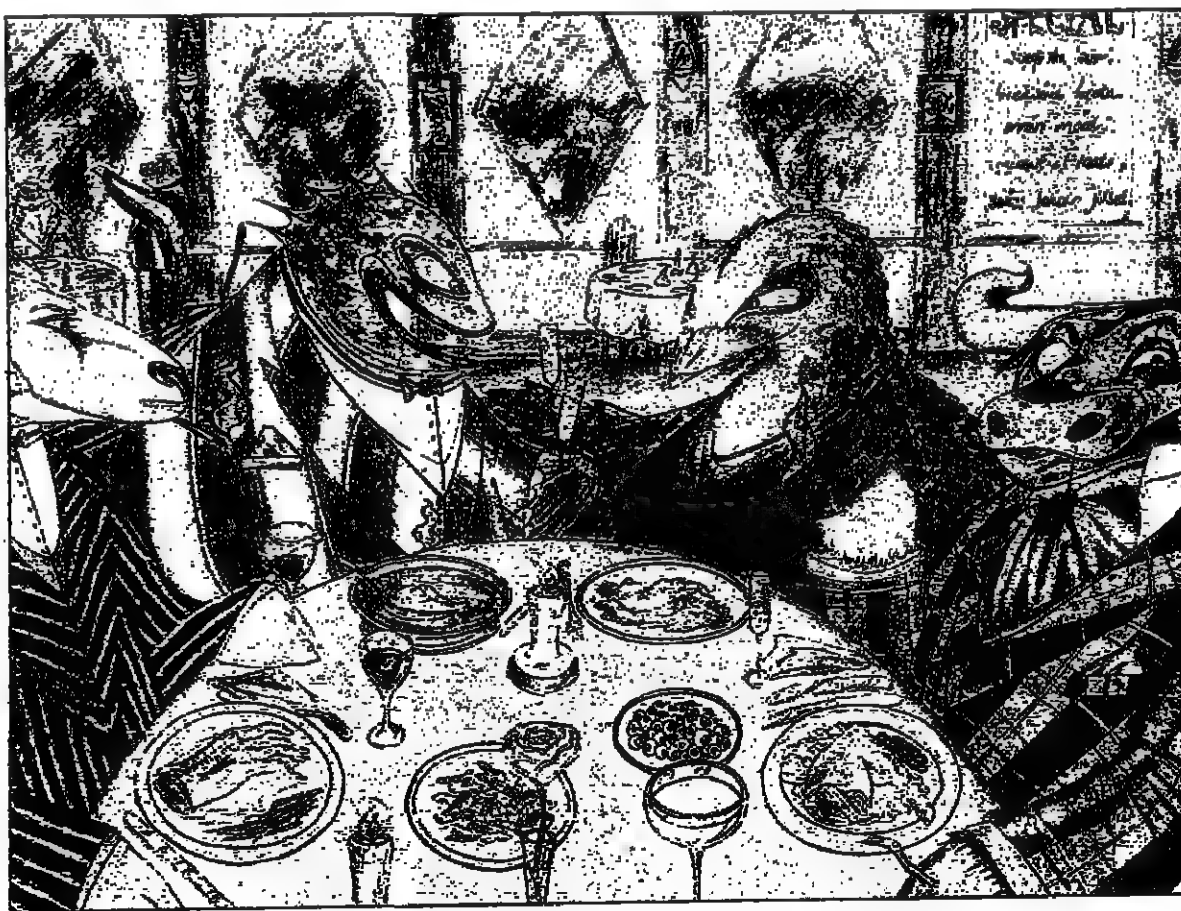
FAFA WOODWARD, 28, from Petham, Kent. Special commendation (under 30)



WILLIAM SPRING, 23, from Stratford-upon-Avon. Second prize (under 30)



CHRISTOPHER SHIPTON, 16, from Wheatley, Oxfordshire. Special commendation (under 18)



DYLAN HENRY LATEGAN, 16, from London. Special commendation (under 18)



LAURA TYSER, 16, from Kelso, Borders. First prize (under 18)

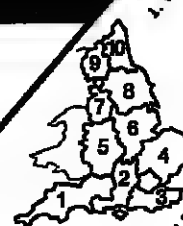


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Planning to see a show or a film, an exhibition or a concert? *The Times* critics select the best entertainment

GALLERIES

Richard Cork

MASTERPIECES FROM THE DORIA PAMPHILI GALLERY Founded in 1650 by Pope Innocent X, the Doria Pamphili collection has belonged to the same family ever since. The most celebrated painting is Velázquez's consummate portrait of Innocent X himself, sumptuous in his crimson cape. But the exhibition contains superb images by other European masters. Caravaggio is at his most lyrical in a highly original *Rest on the Flight into Egypt*. Titian is represented by one of his most beguiling female figures, and Raphael's double portrait is powerful and infinitely mysterious.

National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, London WC2 (0171-839 3321), until May 19. **THE BRITISH ART SHOW** This large survey of contemporary young artists has now arrived in Edinburgh. The largest part of the show, ranging from Damien Hirst to Catherine Yass, is housed in the handsome, light-filled National Gallery of Modern Art. As one of the selectors, I am delighted to see how well the artists have been created by the other six galleries involved. At the beautiful Royal Botanic Gardens, Mat Collishaw, Anya Gallaccio and Douglas Gordon are all given ideal spaces. And the same is true of the Fruitmarket Gallery, where Mark Wallinger shows with Steve McQueen and Sam Taylor-Wood. Elsewhere, at the City Art Centre, the Collective Gallery, the Stills Gallery and the Talbot Rice Gallery, further installations help to explain why new British art is attracting so much international attention. For information about *The British Art Show*, in Edinburgh until April 28, phone 0131-230 5585.

MUSEUMS

John Russell Taylor

UNPOSTED LETTERS At the outbreak of the Second World War, the Polish artists Franciszka and Stefan Themerson have been living in Paris for two years. They both volunteered for the Polish army in France. Franciszka escaped to England in 1940 with the Polish government-in-exile, but Stefan was stranded in the Red Cross hostel for Polish soldiers in Volon. During their two years' separation, Franciszka regularly produced pictorial letters to Stefan, reflecting on the incomprehensibility of war, although she feared that they would not survive ordeal by censorship, and so they were never sent. This is the first time the letters have been shown.

Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London SE1 (0171-416 5000), daily until April 8. **RICHARD SHIRLEY SMITH** The artist is widely known as one of our most brilliant wood-engravers and illustrators, but his interests range far wider than that. In recent years he has branched out successfully into mural decorations, and preparatory cartoons for some important projects feature prominently in the Bath retrospective. Very much in the line of Rex Whistler, they delight in rococo detail and elaborate illusionistic effects. Also included are the original paintings commissioned to illustrate a Folio Society edition of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and the limited edition of the *Poems of Lord Rochester*. Both subjects give full rein to his elegant fantasy and subtle eroticism.

Holburne Museum and Crafts Study Centre, Great Pulteney Street, Bath (01225 466669), daily until April 9. **SCOTTISH OLD AND NEW** Bournemouth's great old classic *La Sylphide* has long been a jewel in



Caravaggio's lyrical and highly original masterpiece, *Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, is one of the many superb images on display at the National Gallery in London

OPERA

Rodney Milnes

SEMELE Last three chances to catch this all-too-brief run of one of the brightest successes of the Covent Garden season, unmissable not just for the one-off combination of Congreve at his best and Handel at his most inspired, but for the London debut of the dazzling American soprano Ruth Ann Swenson, whose warmth and wit in the title role are worthy of its creators. Add Felicity Palmer's jealous Juno, Philip Langridge's suave Jupiter and Charles Mackerras in the pit, and you are somewhere near operatic heaven.

Royal Opera House, Bow St, London WC2 (0171-304 4000), Mon 4, Wed 6, Fri 8, 7pm. **THE RAKE'S PROGRESS** A fresh look at one of the 20th-century's most enigmatic yet enduring operas: Mark Wigglesworth finds more warmth — and Russian colour — in Stravinsky's score than tradition has so far suggested, and Matthew Warchus's production probes deeply beneath the diaphanous surface of the Auden-Kallman libretto. Outstanding playing from the Welsh National Opera Orchestra; Bryn Terfel, oddly blustery on the first night, may have calmed down by now.

New Theatre, Park Place, Cardiff (01222 978899), Thur 7, 7.15pm. **DANCE**

John Percival

SCOTTISH OLD AND NEW Bournemouth's great old classic *La Sylphide* has long been a jewel in

Scottish Ballet's repertoire. For this revival, it is joined by a new work from Mark Baldwin, *Ac Fond Kiss* — title by Burns but music by Stravinsky, from *The Fairy's Kiss*. Theatre Royal, Glasgow (0141-332 9000), Thur 7 to Sat 16, except Sunday and Monday, at 7.15pm; matinees: Sat and Thur 14, 2.15pm; Edinburgh Festival Theatre (0131-529 6000), March 19-23; His Majesty's, Aberdeen (01224 641122), March 26-30; Eden Court, Inverness (01463-234234), April 3-6; Theatre Royal,

the score by Minkus. Drigo, Glazunov and Brian Fieldhouse. Grand Theatre, Leeds (0113-245 9351), Mon 4 to Sat 9, 7.30pm; matinees: Thur 2pm; Sat 2.30pm; Theatre Royal, Nottingham (0115-948 2626), March 12-16; Lyceum, Sheffield (0114-276 9922), April 16-20; New Victoria, Woking (01483-761144), April 23-27.

THEATRE

Benedict Nightingale



Members of the Scottish Ballet in a scene from *La Sylphide*

Newcastle (0191-232 2001), April 9-13; New Theatre, Hull (01482-226659), April 16-20.

DON QUIXOTE Will it be third time lucky for the Northern Ballet Theatre in tackling a new version of Cervantes's story? Christopher Gable and Michael Barrett-Pink are providing choreography and production, but retaining highlights of the traditional *Don Quixote* ballet. Philip Feeney has written new music to supplement

OBSERVE THE SONS OF ULSTER MARCHING TOWARDS THE SOMME Long, ponderous title; tough, moving play that is likely to seem even more timely than when Patrick Mason's first production came to the Edinburgh Festival last summer. Its author, Frank McGuinness, comes from a Catholic, Republican background; but his play makes a sympathetic attempt to enter the heads of Ulster soldiers for whom the Germans present a lesser threat to their Protestant redoubt than the Fenian foe back in Ireland.

Barbican, Silk Street, London EC2 (0171-638 8891), Wed 6 to Sat 16, 7.15pm; matinees: Sat 9, Thur 14, Sat 16, 2pm. **THE GLASS MENAGERIE** Sam Mendes's revival gives Tennessee Williams's memory-play more bite but also more feeling than usual.

JAZZ

Clive Davis

MILES AHEAD Miles Davis's collaborations with the arranger Gil Evans re-defined orchestral jazz. As part of the Towards the Millennium festival, Markus Stenz and the London Sinfonietta will perform concert versions of *Miles Ahead* and *Sketches of Spain*. Davis himself returned to this field at the Montreux Festival just weeks

before his death. Guy Barker and Lew Soloff are the players who have been assigned the daunting task of invoking his ghost this week. The South Bank concert also features a recital by Joanna MacGregor, while the saxophonist Tommy Smith and his band fill the guest slot in Birmingham.

Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank, London SE1 (0171-960 4242), Mon 4, 7.45pm; **Symphony Hall, Birmingham** (0121-212 3333) Tues 5, 7.30pm.



Tommy Smith plays saxophone in a tribute to Miles Davis

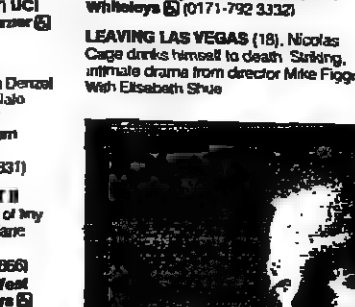
FILMS

Geoff Brown

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY (U) Jane Austen's novel about the Dashwood daughters and their winding paths to romantic fulfilment gets kid-glove treatment from director Ang Lee and his scriptwriter, Emma Thompson. She, of course, plays Sense, the eldest daughter Elinor, afraid to give her heart full rein; though the performance you notice comes from Kate Winslet as the impetuous Marianne. Hard not to notice Hugh Grant, too. As Edward Ferrars, Elinor's shy admirer, he behaves so stiffly that he looks stuffed.

Chelsea (0171-351 3742); **Carzons** Mayfair (0171-369 1720), West End (0171-369 1722), **Odeon Kensington** (01426 914666); **Screen on the Hill** (0171-435 3366).

STRANGE DAYS (18) The director Kathryn Bigelow lets rip with Hollywood's latest technology to create a nightmarish Los Angeles on the brink of the millennium. Ralph Fiennes is the squalid hero, a former cop turned black marketeer whose trafficking in virtual reality brings him up against rape, mur-



Ewen Bremner and Ewan McGregor in *Trainspotting*

LEAVING LAS VEGAS (18) Nicolas Cage drinks himself to death. Starring an intimate drama from director Mike Figgis. With Elisabeth Shue.

JOHNNY MNEUMONIC (18) The Valdez ward the contents of Keanu Reeves's head. Futuristic tale from cyberpunk auteur John Wood. With Laurence Fishburne. Warner (0171-437 4343).

A LITTLE PRINCESS (U) Marvellous rendering of the children's classic with

der and police brutality. The story and characters leave much to be desired, and Bigelow is not above playing the voyeur while violence runs rampant.

MGM Trocadero (0171-434 0031); **Plaza** (0171-437 1234); **UCI Whiteleys** (0171-792 3332); **Warner** (0171-437 4343).

ROCK

David Sinclair

MICHAEL BOLTON Critics have been writing him off as a spent force (and making jokes about his hairstyle) for most of the 1990s. But for all his schmalzy, showboating tendencies, Michael Bolton does have an extraordinarily powerful voice anchored in the R & B traditions of Ray Charles and Otis Redding. Currently promoting his *Greatest Hits 1985-1995* album, he will be singing plenty of old favourites, along with a special operatic interlude which will doubtless induce fresh palpitations among the nation's tastemakers. Support on all dates is from "new classic soul" stars Solo.

Wembley Arena (0181-900 1234), Mar 6, 8, 9; **Newcastle Arena** (0191-401 8000), Mar 11; **NEC, Birmingham** (0121-780 4133), Mar 13, 14; **Manchester Arena** (0161-634 4477), Mar 19; **SECC, Glasgow** (0141-348 9999), Mar 20.

DREADZONE Their surprise hit, *Little Britain*, which heightened up the post-Christmas chart, has given Dreadzone a new lease of life. The band which was started by refugees from Big Audio Dynamite, have mixed dub, dance, reggae and ambient influences to offer a distinctive musical vision that reflects the changing national identity of Britain in the 1990s.

Sheffield University (01142 753300), Mar 6; **Arches, Glasgow** (0141-556 5555), Mar 7; **Que Club, Birmingham** (0121-643 6103), Mar 8; **Manchester University** (0161-832 1111), Mar 9; **Cardiff University** (01222 230130), Mar 11; **Leicester University** (0115-934 3060), Mar 12; **Southampton University** (01703 632601), Mar 13; **Shepherds Bush Empire, London W12** (0181-740 7474), Mar 16.

CLASSICAL

Richard Morrison

FIFTIES FESTIVAL The ten-year Towards the Millennium project in Birmingham and London, celebrating a different decade of the 20th century each spring, has reached the 1950s. That poses a knotty problem for the marketing people. True, Britten and Bernstein wrote useful music during that decade, but it was also the heyday of Stockhausen and Boulez. Simon Rattle dives in at the deep end: his opening concert with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra links Stravinsky and Messiaen with one of the great avant-garde works of the day: Stockhausen's *Gruppen* for three orchestras. This will be played twice, allowing in Birmingham at least the audience to move around and experience its unique spatial qualities from a different angle.

Symphony Hall, Broad St, Birmingham (0121-212 3333), tonight, 7pm; **Festival Hall, South Bank, London SE1** (0171-960 4242), tomorrow, 7.30pm.

VIENNA PIONEERS Vienna Concentus Musicus, the groundbreaking period-instrument group, makes a welcome return to London to play a Haydn programme under the provocative direction of its founder, Nikolaus Harnoncourt. It should be one of the most stimulating concerts of the season.

Barbican, Silk St, London EC2 (0171-638 8891), Mon 4, 7.30pm. **LOCH NESS** (PG) Ted Danson looks for Nessie in a dull, harmless adventure with John Richardson. Director, John Richardson.

THE CHAMBERLAIN (PG) David Storey's touching play about a rugby league team preparing for the weekly game. Third in the season of Royal Court Classics.

CHAPTER TWO Tom Conti and Sharon Gless play unattached New Yorkers whiffing towards each other in Neil Simon's comedy. Not his best. Glasgow, Shaftesbury Avenue, W1 (0171-494 5069), Mon-Fri, 8pm; Sat, 8.15pm; mat 3pm, Sat 5pm.

THE CHAMBERLAIN (PG) David Storey's touching play about a rugby league team preparing for the weekly game. Third in the season of Royal Court Classics.

WEST END THEATRE GUIDE

Jeremy Kingston's assessment of theatre showing in London

House full, returns only. Some seats available. Seats at all prices.

Arts, Great Newport Street, WC2 (0171-636 2132) Mon-Sat, 8pm.

LAUGHING WILD Christopher Durang's comedy about a couple of seriously crazy New Yorkers, one typical, the other neurotic, and too crazy for the play's good.

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NEW RELEASES

Geoff Brown's assessment of films in London and (where indicated with the symbol ●) on release across the country

FRENCH TWIST (18) Jostal French leads with a lesson angle from writer-director Joseph Savelle, who co-wrote with Victoria Avil.

LA MAMME MORTUA (18) Murderer becomes obsessed with the girl who was in a loving, perverse Spanish psychodrama directed by Juanma Barrio.

STRANGE DAYS (18) See Critics' Choice, above.

WHEN SATURDAY COMES (15) Can Sean Bean make the grade with Sheffield Director? Do we care? With Early Lloyd, Unwin, Maria Giese.

BASE (15) Glorious, visceral family film about a sheep-farming pact, with a cast of talking animals.

REED OF ROSES (PG) Writing, whimsical romance set in a fairy-tale New York, with Mary Stuart Masterson and Christopher Moltisanti.

CASINO (18) Scorsese's epic of Las Vegas in the 1930s glories in background detail, but the human drama flags. With Robert De Niro, Sharon Stone and Joe Pez.

THE INDIAN IN THE CUPBOARD (PG) A boy Indian figure comes alive. Reimagined and imaginative version of Lynne Reid Banks's children's stories, directed by Frank Oz.

JUMANJI (PG) Enthralling romp about a rainforest board game that comes to life. With Robin Williams.

A LITTLE PRINCESS (U) Marvellous rendering of the children's classic with

CINEMA GUIDE

Geoff Brown's assessment of films in London and (where indicated with the symbol ●) on release across the country

DESPERADO (18) Overlooked follow-up to El Mariachi, with Antonio Banderas as the guitar-playing killer seeking vengeance. Director, Robert Rodriguez.

DEVIL IN A BLUE DRESS (15) Splendidly atmospheric thriller with Denzel Washington as the ordinary Joe in 1940s Los Angeles struggling over corpses, police and corruption. From Walter Mosley's novel.

FATHER OF THE BRIDE PART II (PG) Steve Martin takes the place of Ivy Lee. Second comedy sequel, with Diane Keaton and Kimberly Williams.

THE INDIAN IN THE CUPBOARD (PG) A boy Indian figure comes alive. Reimagined and imaginative version of Lynne Reid Banks's children's stories, directed by Frank Oz.

JUMANJI (PG) Enthralling romp about a rainforest board game that comes to life. With Robin Williams.

A LITTLE PRINCESS (U) Marvellous rendering of the children's classic with

LEAVING LAS VEGAS (18) Nicolas Cage drinks himself to death. Starring an intimate drama from director Mike Figgis. With Elisabeth Shue.

JOHNNY MNEUMONIC (18) The Valdez ward the contents of Keanu Reeves's head. Futuristic tale from cyberpunk auteur John Wood. With Laurence Fishburne.

A LITTLE PRINCESS (U) Marvellous rendering of the children's classic with

LEAVING LAS VEGAS (18) Nicolas Cage drinks himself to death. Starring an intimate drama from director Mike Figgis. With Elisabeth Shue.

LOCH NESS (PG) Ted Danson looks for Nessie in a dull, harmless adventure with John Richardson. Director, John Richardson.

THE CHAMBERLAIN (PG) David Storey's touching play about a rugby league team preparing for the weekly game. Third in the season of Royal Court Classics.

CHAPTER TWO Tom Conti and Sharon Gless play unattached New Yorkers whiffing towards each other in Neil Simon's comedy. Not his best. Glasgow, Shaftesbury Avenue, W1 (0171-494 5069), Mon-Fri, 8pm; Sat, 8.15pm; mat 3pm, Sat 5pm.

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INSIDE STORY

3

Thirteen-year-old Juliet Webb's *Chocolate Dancer* impressed judge Steve Bell

'The hundreds who entered the competition found out how easy Mel Calman made it look'

You can look at a Cézanne, or read Nicholas Nickleby, and say: "I know Cézanne is a great painter, or that Dickens writes well, but they're just not my cup of tea." But you can't listen to a joke or stare at a cartoon and say: "I know this is really hilarious, but I just don't happen to find it funny."

Everyone has their own sense of humour, just like everyone has their own nose. But while a personal nose for each of us has many advantages — for example, all mankind doesn't have to collectively bend over a flowerbed every time one of us sniffs a daffodil — not having a collective sense of humour makes life tricky in certain situations: such as a Glasgow pub late on a Friday night, or watching Bob Monkhouse on telly, or judging a cartoon competition.

Claire Calman, who helped to judge the Mel Calman Awards handed out this week to seven talented young cartoonists, recalls when her father and fellow cartoonist Poy Simmonds were judging a cartoon competition. Sifting through the entries, they found the calibre depressing. Suddenly Calman cheered up. "There is a bright side to all this," he told Simmonds. "It shows that it's hard to draw cartoons and that we're all right for work."

The hundreds who entered *The Times* Young Cartoonist of the Year competition — which was launched in conjunction with the British Cartoonists' Association last autumn in honour of Mel Calman — found out just how hard cartooning is, and how deceptively easy Mel Calman made it look in those funny, wicked, mischievous or moving pocket cartoons he drew for *The Times* front page for 15 years.

"You can't train a cartoonist," says Peter Brookes, *The Times*' political cartoonist and another of the judges. "They just emerge. A lot of people think that the drawing is important, but it's not as important as the idea."

"The overall standard of drawing in the competition was good. But it's ideas that count. A cartoon is something that makes you think. You don't have to laugh at a cartoon. It doesn't have to be funny but it must be something that makes you sit up."

Simmonds, also on the judging panel, agrees that "ideas are the first thing that have to be right. Look at Thurber's drawings. He couldn't really draw — but he had the ideas. And Gary Larson: his drawing is very simple, but his cartoons are absolutely wonderful."

Yet even when you have struck on an idea, the humour still pivots on the phrasing of the caption. Simmonds, who has been drawing her brilliant cartoons since she was eight, tells the story of how Calman, offering an elder statesman's helping hand to a rising talent, suggested a revision on one of her early captions. She recalls: "One teddy bear was asking

Christopher Shipton, 16, with his *Fruits de Mer*

another bear, 'Are you going to sleep with me tonight?' and Calman said, 'Aren't you much funnier?'"

But while she found "very few jokes" among the entries, "no strip cartoons, and certainly nothing like Calman used to do", she thought the winning caricature of BBC's *Food and Drink* team by 17-year-old Jonathan Cusick "was incredibly good. Technically, it's a very good drawing and a very good likeness."

Cusick, from Tamworth, Staffordshire, was jolted when he won the overall prize, not just because of his youth and because his art course tutor at the University of Central England was dismissive of this area of his talents, but because the Royal Mail had assured him that his competition entry — which he had sent by recorded delivery — had been lost in the Christmas post. "So when I got the letter saying that I'd been chosen I was flabbergasted."

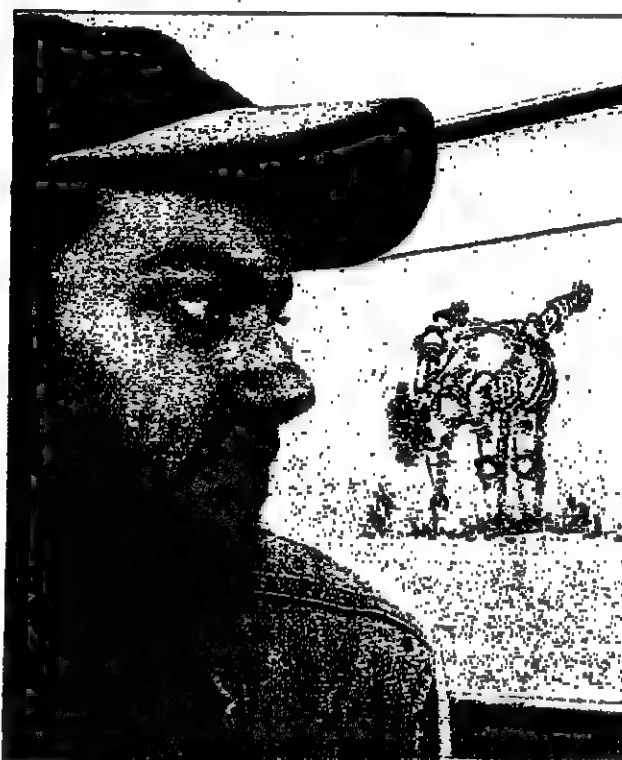
He says — but doesn't mean — that "people at art school don't take me seriously because I'm into caricatures and cartoons. They think I haven't grown up yet. They say I'm wasting my time. My tutor last year told me that there were thousands of illustrators who could do what I do. He said the illustration boom was in the 1980s and



Keith Floyd proved a winner for Laura Tyson, 16



Jonathan Cusick, 17, the overall winner, hopes that his tutor will take him more seriously now. "People think I'm wasting my time on cartoons"

William Spring, 23, with *Peeking Knight*

punch and made the best effort I could. My mother thinks it's wonderful."

Laura Tyson, the 16-year-old farmer's daughter who won the under-18 section with her caricature of the telly chef Keith Floyd, has also focused more on a cartooning future since entering the competition. Studying for Scottish Highers in art, maths, French and English at Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland, Tyson said it was only her mother's prodding that persuaded her to try her luck. Until now, the school magazine has been her main outlet. She feels that pocket cartoons are "still a bit advanced for me yet. I hope I can move on to try that."

David Driver, head of design at *The Times* and another of the award judges, says he wasn't too surprised that more drawings turned out to be caricatures than pocket cartoons. "People tend, when they are drawing at school or for their own amusement, to do caricatures rather than political cartoons, and since the framework for this competition was very open, this was obviously why there were more caricatures than political or pocket cartoons. So next year we may narrow down the brief."

Driver, who has always been sceptical about the volume of hidden cartooning talent waiting to be discovered, was heartened by the quality of the entries: "I honestly thought it was going to be far more gloomy than it turned out."

Claire Calman is also hoping next year's competition will "see people taking a bit more in the way of risk. Cartooning is anarchic by nature, and you don't get anywhere without taking risks." But she still spotted "a few promising people and you thought, 'Yeah, if they stick

at it, they might make it'."

Steve Bell, *The Guardian* cartoonist who has put John Major's underpants on the map and on the outside of his trousers, was a little disappointed at the lack of jokes but impressed by the quality of drawing. "I thought the stuff from the younger entrants was better than the older stuff. I was looking for cartoons who made me laugh, but that's a tall order. There wasn't much in the way of political cartooning. The one of the girl dancer craving chocolate tickled me. That's one of my favourites."

"All I can say is we need more cartoonists. I don't want to put anyone off. Just keep doing it."

So how did Bell get ahead? "I used to do it at school — I used to draw in the flyleaves of books. I drew teachers and politicians. When I started out I was crap, as we all are when we start. But you learn cartooning by practising." Any big influences? "The *Beano*. It changed my life."

For those who keep practising, the future is not orange but golden, according to Brookes — although he winces and grows wistful at stories about how David Low, when he drew for *The Guardian*, was paid more than the newspaper's editor.

"Ten years ago there was only one broadsheet political cartoonist — that was Garland. Now every newspaper has one. Gag cartoons are also flourishing because magazines such as *The Spectator* and *Private Eye* are giving more prominence to them." He says editors realise that "in a television age, people can catch the essence of a story in a nanosecond through a cartoon. An article can't do that. 'People are taking cartoons much more seriously these days.'"

JOE JOSEPH

Photographs by MARTIN BEDDALL



Fafa Woodward's humorous offering won her a special commendation

Ruth Gledhill goes on retreat in the Yorkshire Dales

Spirit of community



TRY AS it might, no church can ever quite compete with the natural architecture of the Yorkshire Dales in evoking a sense of the presence of God. As a Christian retreat, Scargill House has an elevated feel because of the stark and spectacular nature of the created order around it.

We joined about 70 people from different parishes in the area on a "living prayer" weekend. Many confessed that they returned repeatedly to the centre, finding there a retreat from the institutional Christianity of their churches as well as from the pressures of work and secular life. During our stay we were looked after by the resident community of about 40 people, mostly young, single men and women who opt for a quasi-monastic lifestyle for a period of their lives. Sometimes the community members, who do everything from washing up to playing guitars and leading worship, stay for years. Members, who promise to commit themselves to community life, receive only a small weekly allowance plus board and lodging. According to the Rev Margaret Cundiff's *Miracle in the Dales*, the story of Scargill House, the community members are a family in deed as well as word, who bear witness to Christ "by their corporate lifestyle as well as by their individual personalities".

Our discussion group was led by John Wilson, a Roman Catholic lay chaplain, who turned out to be a mine of wise sayings such as: "We are often so busy thinking about the future and worrying about yesterday that we forget about today." His aim was to show us that prayer and communion need not be

divorced from daily living but could become an integral part of it. Mr Wilson asked us to reflect on how the Lord's Prayer related to our daily lives. Some of us pondered on the line: "Lead us not into temptation." Beryl, a missionary who had recently returned from years in Argentina to find this country equally in need of mission, reflected that the individual had to take some responsibility where temptation was concerned. "It is a bit like an alcoholic who chooses to go into a bar. They know they will be tempted to drink," she said.

The highlight of a day which also included worship and meals was a two-hour walk in the freezing wind, rain and sleet which descended in the afternoon dusk. Scargill House takes its name from the natural wall of grey limestone, or "scar", behind it and the "ghyll" or dry gully beside it. During what turned out to be both a spiritual and a physical workout, residents and those on retreat said they found that the open air was more conducive to confessing difficulties and making spiritual progress. Scargill House, like the better-known communities at Iona in Scotland and Taizé in France, is one of a growing number of modern Christian communities which have thrived as the mainstream churches have declined in an era of rapid social change. As Mrs Cundiff says in her book, it may be that such communities "are part of God's answer to the needs of the church and society today".

Scargill House will feature on Yorkshire Television's Tonight programme on Wednesday, March 6, in the second of eight brief features about where to worship in Yorkshire, presented by Ruth Gledhill.

Scargill House, Kettlewell, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD25 5HU (01756 760234).

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RAC

This spring an English garden from Shakespeare's time will be planted in the heart of London

A knot that ties a medieval garden with the Globe



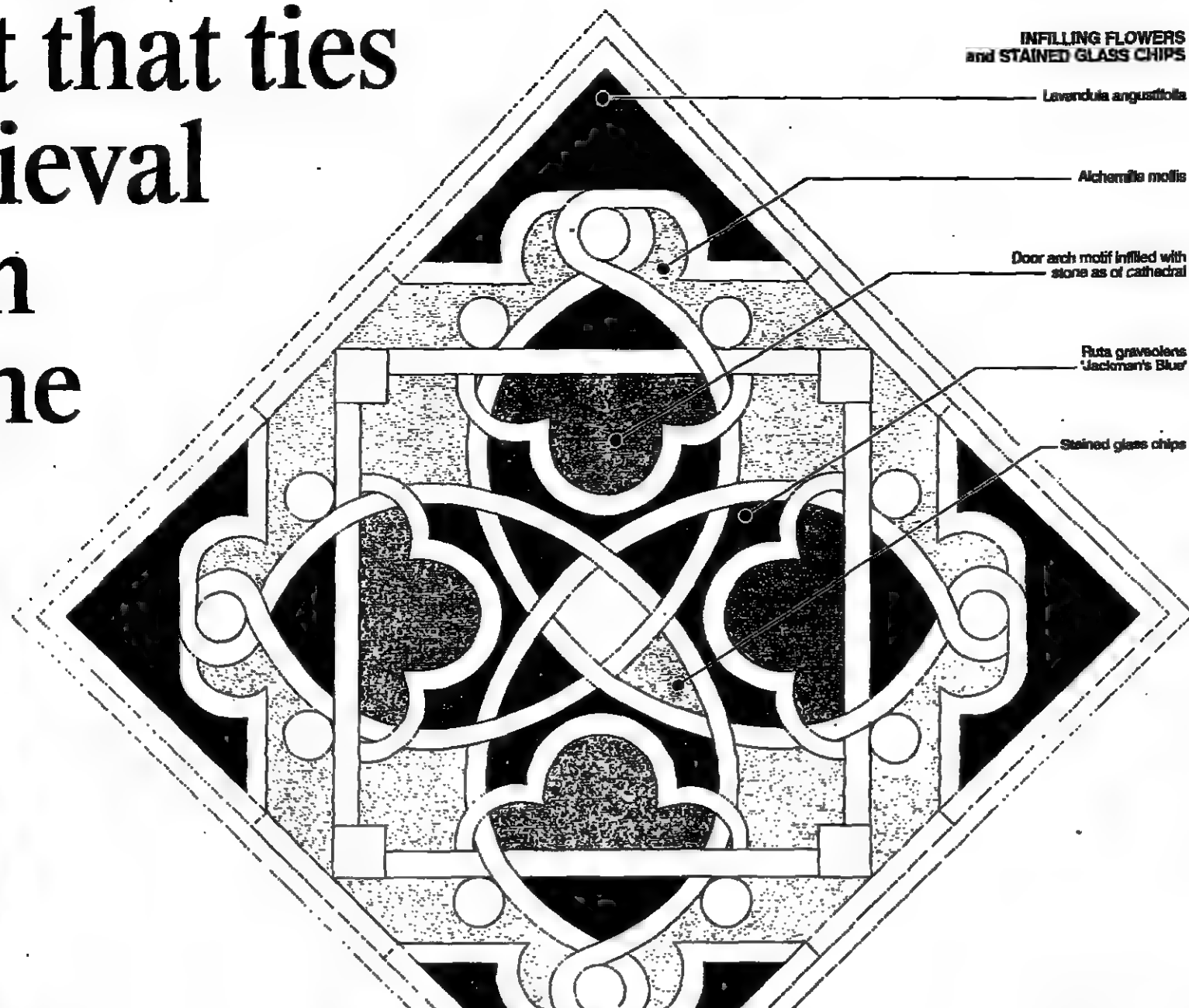
Michèle Renouf inspired and designed the knot garden due to be planted at Southwark

A new Elizabethan garden is about to be sown and planted in the heart of London. It will be a companion piece to the Globe Theatre, the full-scale replica of an Elizabethan playhouse inspired by the late Sam Wanamaker. The garden — a knot garden — will be in the grounds of Southwark Cathedral, a stone's throw from the theatre, which is due to open in July.

The garden is the idea of Lady (Michèle) Renouf, who is a member of the Globe Appeals Advisory Committee. She is better known as an actress in television commercials, including appearances for Oil of Ulay and After Eight chocolates. Japanese viewers have seen her as an English hostess pouring Nescafé at Hever Castle in Kent.

Renouf, an Australian, has many other interests, all in different ways connected with "the vanities and dignities involved in human packaging", as she puts it. She has designed ballet costumes, dome interior decorating, taught stage design and studio pottery and, in the late 1980s, studied garden design at the English Gardening School, at the Chelsea Physic Garden.

She met Wanamaker socially and was so inspired by his vision for the Globe that she suggested including an Elizabethan garden in his plans. At first, the intention was to



STRAIGHT HEDGING AND TOPIARY

Tissue beacons

Open portal of *Buxus sempervirens* (Suffruticosa)

Low metal outlines as in stained glass

Low stone wall surround

CURVED HEDGING

Rosa rugosa

Berberis thunbergii (deciduous)

Lavandula spica (or *Phyllaea angustifolia*)

Santolina

Chamaecyparissus

Ilex aquifolium

have the garden in front of the house of the Provost of Southwark Cathedral, which is adjacent to the Globe. But it has now been agreed that it should be in the churchyard, where there is an admirable space, about 21 feet square, by the cathedral wall and visible to passers-by. The cathedral has always considered it had a connection with Shakespeare and celebrates his birthday each year.

Knot gardens are formal gardens in which low hedges of box and yew form an interlaced pattern, infilled with flowers or other decoration. The first English reference to them appears to be a payment to a gardener at Thornbury Castle, Gloucestershire, in 1520 "for diligence in making knot gardens".

Renouf has based her design on one of the many fine "knots" illustrated in a book of 1638, Lawson's *The Country Housewife's Garden*. But in authentic Elizabethan style she has introduced motifs of her own, such as echoes of the cathedral's triple-arched doorways. These doorways are supposed to symbolise welcome and access for all, and in the garden design the form of the arches will be "drawn" in holly to symbolise, in turn, Jesus's crown of thorns and the need for compassion.

The provost, the Very Rev Colin Slee, has asked her to try to include

some "fun" conceits that will amuse visiting schoolchildren, such as the outlines of the distinctive heads of the family in the *The Simpsons* television cartoon. She thinks the head of Bart, the son, like the zigzag top of a paperbag, and the star-shaped head of the daughter, Lisa, will be "a good send for topiary".

For the infill, she does not want to use the solid, Victorian-style infill used, for instance, in the garden that has been re-created at New Place in Stratford. In most early English gardens, she says, the flowers were planted more individually, with space between them, to bring out their preciousness, especially when exotic flowers such as tulips arrived in England.

She proposes seasonal changes in the flowers, which will sometimes be more densely planted, sometimes more individually. The flowers — marjoram, rue, pansies, primroses —

will be chosen for their symbolic meaning as well as their beauty, and will be accompanied by little enamel flags inscribed with the flower's name and a Shakespearean allusion to it: "Indeed, sir, she was the sweet marjoram of the salad, or rather, the herb of grace," or "There is pansies, that's for thoughts". The curved hedges will be of dwarf berberis, lavender and rosemary.

The Elizabethans also used infillings such as coloured chalk or brick dust for dramatic effect, and Renouf plans to use glittering coloured glass in the centre knots, hoping it may be regularly replaced by the Guild of Glaziers nearby.

The whole garden in Elizabethan times was, in fact, a nest of symbols and allegories, and Renouf would like to see, in addition, heraldic figures on white and green painted posts among the flowerbeds and borders, catching the sunlight, adding a theatrical flourish and reminding visitors of the code of

chivalry. The provost hopes to go further and, in due course, create a complementary garden by the side of the one about to be planted. This will be a monastic herb garden, to celebrate another aspect of medieval interest in plants — the healing activities of the church. In Southwark, this goes back to the founding of St Thomas' Hospital by the cathedral monks.

Renouf met some opposition when she first mooted her idea. This came from the architect of the Globe, Theo Crosby, who said he wanted an ambience of bear-baiting and brothels around the theatre, not a knot garden. Renouf wrote back a spirited letter saying that there would plenty of the modern equivalent of those around the place, and signed the letter "Miss Quickly", to suggest that she was a bit more than the precious soul he took her for. He did not yield, but Wanamaker and his colleagues still liked the idea and it went forward again after Crosby's death.

It is hoped that the Fabric Advisory Committee of the cathedral will shortly give approval to the garden. That final hurdle passed, the provost and Miss Quickly will soon be out in the spring sunshine, "diligently making knots".

DERWENT MAY

GARDEN ANSWERS



STEPHEN ANDERTON replies to reader's letters

Q I have two established and productive bush apple trees (Bramley and Newton Wonder) both affected with bitter pit. I am told to spray them while in leaf with a calcium compound. What is this and where do I get it? — J.W. McCloy, Shrewsbury, Shropshire.

A Bitter pit is a problem of the fruit only and appears as small, brown sunken areas of skin and more small, brown marks throughout the flesh. To minimise the problem, first make sure that the trees never lack for water, perhaps by giving them a mulch as well as water in dry periods. Second, spray with hydrated calcium nitrate to increase calcium levels in the shoots and fruit. Lack of calcium is thought to be a contributory cause of bitter pit. For a brochure and instructions on using calcium nitrate, contact Garden Direct, Geddings Road, Hoddeston, Hertfordshire EN11 0LR (01992 441888).

Q My 80-year-old mother can no longer mow her 12ft by 40ft lawn and I would like to turn it into a meadow with wildflowers. The lawn has lots of weeds and is on poor, soil. I cannot redig the lawn, so could I feed it and then rake wildflower seeds into the grass? How much seed should I buy and from where? — Mrs N. Taylor, Rochdale, Lancashire.

A I would dearly love to dissuade you from this, for several reasons. First, wildflower meadows close to a small house look unkempt rather than natural. Second, until you make hay of the long grass in July or August you cannot walk in the area without flattening it. And then, after cutting, it looks brown for weeks. Third, cutting the hay in summer requires a scythe or a powerful mower. And all that hay has to be raked up and put somewhere. Fourth, you will have all this work regardless of the quality of the wildflower content of the sward, and building up a good wildflower meadow is slow and not at all easy. A wildflower meadow is not an option I would inflict on anyone who wants less work or fast results. Yes, I know they look wonderful in big, wild gardens. I suggest you let the grass grow this year until August, without worrying about improving the species content, and see if you can stand it practically. If not, then nothing is lost. If you like it,

then start introducing plantlets of wildflowers into the turf next spring. This works better than seed in an established lawn. Above all, do not feed it: wildflowers do better on poor soils where coarse grasses cannot swamp them.

Q We live on top of a hill and our garden is very exposed. There is an area of grass and trees in which I would like to grow a carpet of crocus. Is there a crocus which is wind resistant? — Mrs M.E. Whitmore, Bristol.

A Crocuses give off their best only in good weather, when the sun warms them and opens the flowers. But no individual flowers last for more than a few



Showy: *C. chrysanthus*

days and if they are battered by wind or rain the show can be dismal. In windy places it is better to grow not the large Dutch hybrid crocuses but the earlier, shorter species such as *Crocus tommasinianus*, *aureus*, *chrysanthus* and their hybrids. *Tommasinianus* is pale mauve and seeds well, even in grass. It is followed by yellow *aureus* and the *chrysanthus* hybrids, which can be a whole mixture of creams and bronzes and yellow. Look out for 'Snow Bunting', 'Cream Beauty', 'Blue Pearl' and 'Zwanenburg Bronze'. To give the crocus flowers some support, leave the grass a couple of inches long over winter, so that they are not broken by wind before they have a chance to open. Is this area of grass and trees rabbit free? Rabbits love crocus leaves.

● Readers wishing to have their gardening problems answered should write to: Garden Answers, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington St, London E1 9XN. We regret that few personal answers can be given and that it may not be possible to deal with every request. Advice is offered without legal responsibility. The Times also regrets that enclosures accompanying letters cannot be returned.

Weaving a natural line in willow

On the Somerset Levels an ancient craft is attracting new admirers

Should a modern-day Orsino wish to pine outside his Olivia's gate he would do well to ask James Hector to make him a willow cabin. Such a cabin, or summerhouse, will cost £1,990 and be built of Somerset willow, on site, to the customer's requirements. If that seems too extravagant, the mournful lover could shelter in the lee of a hand-woven fence, or hurdle, made from willow coppiced off the maker's woodland.

For four generations, English Hurdle, which is run by Mr Hector's father, has been making and selling willow products, including baskets, garden gates, plant climbers and garden seating. Hurdles can be ordered in a variety of sizes: a typical panel is 6ft by 6ft and costs £35. Willow for the fencing is grown without fertiliser and untreated by chemicals, making it particularly suitable for training climbing plants.

"The willow can be woven as soon as it's cut," Mr Hector says. "If it has been stored

after cutting, it needs to be soaked with water for five days to make it flexible again, but nothing else needs doing." After a few months the willow will dry out completely and the bark will fall away.

Untreated hurdles will last six to ten years, he says, and their life can be prolonged with creosote or Cuprinol if they are to be used solely as fences or windbreaks.

Mr Hector says that it is the natural quality of the willow that makes his work so popular — 100 acres having proved inadequate to demand, English Hurdle is looking to increase its holdings on the Somerset Levels. Until recently the willow was all cut by hand; every year from November to March; but with so much acreage the Hectors now use cutting machinery. But that is the only concession to modern methods.

"People really like the look of a woven fence," he says. "You get something long-lasting and natural, and it isn't as costly as, say, a dry-stone



James Hector, seated on a pile of hurdles, with a bunch of willow ready for weaving

wall." They are particularly good for protecting a young hedge as it settles in, he adds. Mr Hector has not always been in the family trade. He started as a physicist and then worked for a while monitoring earthquakes. "I moved back to Somerset from London when I married," he says. "It's nice being involved with a product that people really appreciate."

The firm claims to be the largest of its kind in Britain and has supplied the National Trust and English Heritage, done some film work (for *Willow*, of course) and made

panels for a maze at Legoland at Windsor, Berkshire. Wickwork is an ancient art and examples have been unearthed at nearby Glastonbury, dated 3500 BC. But English Hurdle, with a workforce of 20, is working to reconcile ancient and modern. Perhaps, 5,000 years on, one of its hurdles will be found at the bottom of your garden.

ERICA WAGNER

● English Hurdle, Carload, Stoke St Gregory, Taunton, Somerset TA3 6JD (01828 688418, fax 01823 688599).

WEEKEND TIPS

- Buy your seed potatoes, particularly early varieties, and spread them out in a box to sprout on a light but cool window sill or in a shed.
- Herbaceous perennials can be lifted and divided this month: deal first with early shooting species such as euphorbia.
- Hybrid tea, floribunda and climbing roses can be given their final pruning, always cutting to an outward-pointing bud.
- Lightly scarify lawns in dry, breezy weather.

S.A.

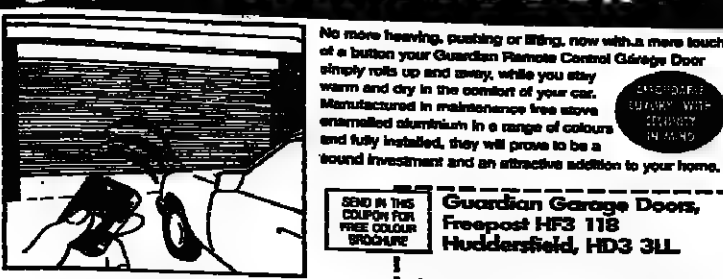


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8

RECORDINGS

NEW ON CD: Real odd Beatles sounds; tribute to the singer's singer; two times Brahms

POP SINGLE

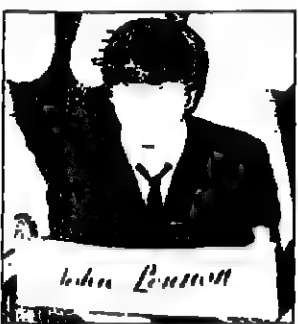
David Sinclair

THE BEATLES

Real Love

Apple/Parlophone S 82646
THE rapid chart decline of *Free as a Bird* suggests that the public's theoretical enthusiasm for a Beatles "reunion" quickly waned when confronted by the reality.

The follow-up, *Real Love*, is likely to receive short shrift. Recorded under similarly inauspicious conditions — with Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr adding their parts to a cassette demo-recording of John Lennon 17 years ago — it is an inconsequential number.



Retrospective voices

Lennon's voice is understandably blurred. The other three do their best to plug the gaps, and Jeff Lynne's production lends a superficial gloss to an otherwise pedestrian arrangement. But bereft of energy, it hardly sounds like the result of a minor technological miracle, just a bit odd and unbelievably ancient.

POP ALBUM

David Sinclair

STING

Mercury Falling

ATM 540 48w
THE reconfiguration of British pop that has taken place in the past two years will have done little to dent Sting's enduring popularity. But it has stripped whatever re-

mained of his appeal, leaving him marooned once and for all in the flatlands.

Unfortunately, this turn of events coincides with an album which sees something of a furrow returning to the blond troubadour's brow. *Mercury Falling* offers nothing so daunting as the introspection of 1991's *The Soul Cages*, but neither is it brightened by the jaunty mood of *Ten Summoner's Tales* (unless you count *I'm So Happy I Can't Stop Crying*, a number surely lifted straight from the Clive James guide to writing fake country songs).

Lyrics such as "I walk through the day/My coat around my ears/I look for my companion/I have to dry my tears" are printed on the accompanying booklet amid pictures of Sting wandering among the woodlands.

The musicianship is superlative, the performances buffed to perfection and the tunes get under the skin. But it is hard to work up enthusiasm for an album with so little fire in its belly.

JAZZ

Clive Davis

CHARLIE HADEN

QUARTET WEST

Now is the Hour

Verve 529827***

IF I were forced to name the most accomplished working group of the past ten years, Quartet West would come to mind. The immaculate ensemble playing and programmatic approach gives every album a distinctive aura.

Haden makes no use of archive material — a device that was in danger of being over-used before. But saxophonist Ernie Watts, drummer Larnelle Harris and pianist Alan Broadbent are all back at their usual posts. Broadbent has also written atmospheric string arrangements which astutely avoid interrupting the flow of solos. Most audacious of all, perhaps, is the way in which his truncated setting of Lennie

CARRINGTON

PolyGram, 18, 1995

DORA CARRINGTON's name may be on the film, and Emma Thompson may play her, but the young painter who formed an unlikely alliance with Lytton Strachey, Bloomsbury's gay aesthete, takes a back seat in Christopher Hampton's drama. Strachey drives this film. Aside from Jonathan Pryce's performance, *Carrington* is cold, fragmentary and hollow, though its surfaces are pleasantly decorative. Available to rent.

DEAD OF NIGHT

Lumiere, PG, 1945

ANXIOUS to spread Ealing's wings after the war, producer Michael Balcon instigated this renowned compendium of supernatural stories. The real pearl is Robert Hamer's tale about stifled passions and the hidden life of a haunted mirror. The film's only drawback is the silly comic relief with Basil Radford and Naunton Wayne on the golf course.

FUN

Tartan, 18, 1994

"FUN is number one!" one teenager remarks after a prank leaves an old woman dead. Luckily the film skirts direct exploitation and explores the aimless lives of two bad girls. Director Rafal Zielinski struggles to make his film look rough and uncompromising, but the performances by Renée Humphrey and Alicia Witt are genuinely unnerving.

HAUNTED

Lumiere, 15, 1995

In this creaky adaptation of James Herbert's novel, *The Turn of the*

Tristano's *Requiem*, with a violin reproducing the pianist's right-hand phrases, fades into a spirited string-free reading of Charlie Parker's *Back Home Blues*.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Blue Note Plays Sinatra

Blue Note CDPT-35282***

FAR from being a cheap stunt, this invigorating compilation underscores the jazz fraternity's long-standing admiration for the singer's singer.

Dexter Gordon's *Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out to Dry* and Ike Quebec's *Nancy (with the Laughing Face)* may be safe choices, but Joe Lovano's *Angel Eyes* and Sonny Rollins's *I've Got You Under My Skin* head the list of surprises.

ORCHESTRAL

Barry Millington

BRAHMS/SCHUMANN

Violin Concertos

Bell/Cleveland

Orchestra/Dohnanyi

Decca 444 811-2***

BRAHMS/MOZART

Violin Concertos

Zimmermann/Berlin

Philharmonic/Sawallisch

EMI CDC 5 55426 2***

THE most striking difference between these two new versions of Brahms's Violin Concerto — one with Joshua Bell and the Cleveland Orchestra; the other with Frank Peter Zimmermann and the Berlin

Philharmonic — is in the quality of orchestral sound. The Cleveland sound is lean, clean and vital; the Berliners is luxurious and velvety. Sawallisch's handling of the score is weightier too, and his soloist, Zimmermann, complements that approach with his attacking style: Bell does not lack power, but he often exploits a vein of introspective fantasy.

If the honours are pretty evenly divided between these two fine young interpreters, the matter may be decided for you by the coupling. Zimmermann offers an expressive account of Mozart's G Major Violin Concerto. Bell makes an eloquent case for the grossly neglected D Minor Concerto of Schumann.

VOCAL

Hilary Finch

SIBELIUS

Songs Vol. 3

Von Otter/Forsberg

BIS-CD-757***

ANNE Sofie von Otter and her pianist Bengt Forsberg relate the haunting tale of *The Wood Nymph*, and also offer four more world premiere recordings: *The Jewish Girl's Song*; an early solo version of the choral *Likhet*; *En visa* and the duet *Tanken*.

These treasures are complemented by 13 songs to the poetry of Runeberg, and six of Sibelius's German language settings, all in supple, sympathetic performances.

WINGS IN THE NIGHT

Swedish Songs

Von Otter/Forsberg

DG 449 189-2***

Meanwhile, von Otter's latest recording of Swedish songs from the turn of the century is nothing short of a revelation.

Here is the musical equivalent of the Golden Age of Nordic painting: those dreams of a summer night expressed in the language of National Romanticism and Symbolism. Here, from Peterson-Berger, are the folk-songs and the *Marit Songs* which could have been written for von Otter's light, lyric mezzo-soprano. Some of the most powerful vocal writing is by Ture Rangstrom. Here is his *Pan* and *Wings in the Night* which gives this disc its name.

OPERA

John Higgins

GALINA GORCHAKOVA

Arias

Kirov Orchestra/Cergiev

Philips 446 405-2***

GORCHAKOVA's recital offers a well-chosen double glance into the past and the future in the middle is Tchaikovsky, the composer on whom she established her now very considerable reputation in the West. The outsidings are provided by Verdi, sung by Gorchakova in her native Russia but a little-known quantity for the rest of us.

Few ladies bare their souls more openly than Tatyana writing her night-time letter to Eugene Onegin. This is Tchaikovsky with full emotional thrust, urged on by Valery Gergiev and the Kirov Orchestra in tingling mood. Lisa in *The Queen of Spades* has even more reason to be haunted by the image of the stranger who stared at her in the Winter Garden. Real Gorchakova territory.

The Verdi is less clear-cut. Gorchakova's soprano has too much of a mezzo-ish tinge to make her an ideal Desdemona in the *Willow Song* and *Ave Maria* from *Otello*, and *O patria mia* from *Aida* ends with uncharacteristic abruptness. But the two Leonoras, *Forza* and *Trovatore*, find her back on form.

LOTTE LEHMANN

IN OPERA

Nimbus 787.3***

THIS collection shows the great soprano at the start of her lengthy international career. Here is Lehmann in lighter roles little associated with her, including *Susanna* in *Figaro* and *Zerlina* in *Don Giovanni*. In both she is admirably partnered by Heinrich Schranz, a baritone good enough to be the subject of a Nimbus disc.

But Agathe (*Fraischütz*) is there, the part which led her from Hamburg to become one of the great divas of Vienna. It is easy to see why: a pure, limpid tone which needs little or no support from the primitive orchestra.

★ Worth hearing
★★ Worth considering
★★★ Worth buying

TODAY BLOCKBUSTER VIDEO OFFERS EVERY TIMES READER THE CHANCE TO TAKE OUT A FREE FILM

Curl up with an icon of the cinema

Hard to imagine this now, but once upon a time there was a world without video. If you craved a viewing of your favourite film, whether *Psycho* or *The Seventh Seal*, you had to scour the TV schedules or make a trek to a repertory cinema. If the film was on the box at midnight, you had to stay up, bleary-eyed. You could not fast forward through the adverts. You could not freeze a frame, or repeat a treasured moment. The film was not yours; it was theirs — the television companies, the distributors — and you were always subject to their whims.

Now you can own or borrow a film as easily as you can a book. There is a trade-off, of course. For the convenience of watching a film at your leisure, surrounded by the comforts of home, you miss the cinema's communal experience. It takes effort to enjoy even a miracle of comedy, by Buster Keaton sitting alone surrounded by the dog

The lure of video remains impossible to resist, especially as cinema celebrates its centenary, says Geoff Brown, film critic of *The Times*

basket, the gas bill, and other domestic clutter. Far better to sit in the dark and be swept up in a tidal wave of laughter. You also sacrifice the cinema image's size and texture, particularly with silent films, where the material available for the video transfer may not be of high quality.

Yet the lure of video remains impossible to resist, especially as cinema celebrates its centenary. Though gaps persist in the repertoire — where, for instance, are the Renée Clair classics of

the 1930s — the range of titles for sale or rental gets wider month by month. What cinema in Britain would be able to offer punters the animation output of the American comic-strip pioneer Winsor McCay, creator of *Little Nemo in Slumberland*? Yet a video containing McCay's complete works landed on my doormat this week.

Six months after their release, the big Hollywood guns arrive in the rental shops; they take 12 months to reach satellite television. You can revisit *The Avengers* and *Dr Who*; check out *Storm Over Asia*, *The End of St. Petersburg*, and those other Russian classics you have read about but never seen. You can curl up with an icon, whether Humphrey Bogart, James Dean, or Marilyn Monroe; or linger over masterpieces like Renoir's *La Règle du Jeu*, Marcel Carné's *Les Enfants du Paradis*, or Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai*. If the mood strikes, you can also pull out the mat, put on the leotards, and buckle down to *Lydia Wong's Complete Holistic Workout*.

The video phenomenon is not going to go away. This week's big cinema release, *Strange Days*, suggests that by 2000 the fashionable entertainment for degenerate Los Angelenos will be illicit virtual reality discs, which "tape" experiences straight from the brain. Whether this comes about or not — and no doubt it will — it takes no great prophet to foretell that cinema's future lies largely with home entertainment.

By the time cinema celebrates its 100th birthday, we may be too scared to venture out. But we will still see *Casablanca* and *The Wizard of Oz*; Video, or whatever successor technology invents, will always keep cinema's flame burning.

Here's looking at you: *Casablanca* starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman

Enjoy a free video



Sharp performance: Johnny Depp as Edward Scissorhands

Starting today *The Times*, in association with Blockbuster Video, gives you the chance to see your favourite film — FREE. You can choose from up to thousands of titles including classics such as — *Brief Encounter*, *Casablanca*, *Gone with the Wind*, the Marx Brothers and Laurel and Hardy. Or see again box office hits such as *ET*, *The Godfather*, *Jaws* or *Sleepless in Seattle*.

Simply collect three of the six tokens appearing in *The Times* until next Friday and take them, with the voucher below, to your local branch of Blockbuster Video.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

You may choose any film from the Blockbuster Video Movie Collection and keep your video for up to two nights. The offer is valid from March 6 to April 3, 1996. If you are not already a member of Blockbuster Video you will need to join, free of charge, by producing two forms of identification, eg. a driver's licence or a bank statement. Not to be used in conjunction with any other offer. No cash alternative.

BLOCKBUSTER VIDEO VOUCHER

This voucher, with another two differently numbered tokens, entitles the bearer to have a free video for up to two nights, from the Blockbuster Video Movie Collection. Offer valid until April 3, 1996, subject to availability. If you are not a member of Blockbuster Video, you will need to join, free of charge, by showing two forms of identification (eg. driver's licence or bank statement).

THE TIMES

BLOCKBUSTER VIDEO

TOKEN 1



The Wizard of Oz: retrace the Yellow Brick Road

Derwent May hears royal biographers Sarah Bradford, Philip Ziegler and Hugo Vickers express resentment of Palace secrecy

Seeing red where blood is blue

The Royal Society of Literature lived up to its name last week. Three royal biographers were talking about their work, and the evening meeting also attracted some members of the Royal Household — perhaps keeping an eye on things? Lady de Bellaigue, registrar of the royal archives, was among them, as was Sir Robert Fellowes, the Queen's private secretary. However, John Grigg, who was in the chair, announced that Sir Robert had already indicated he would have to leave before the end "so his early departure should not be taken as a statement".

The first speaker was the controversial Sarah Bradford, of *Elizabeth* fame. "I was amazed to find myself the subject of the most malignant, the most reckless and the most adroit ridicule," she

declared, before revealing that this was a quote from Disraeli after the publication of his first novel, *Vivian Grey*. But it applied to her too, she said, after *Elizabeth* was published and serialised in *The Times*, and she had no doubt that it applied to Grigg after he made the first modest suggestion 40 years ago that the Queen should make herself better known to her people. She defended her use of gossip — or "oral testimony" — in her biography, since half of what we knew about royalty in the past came from the gossip of people such as Pepys and Saint-Simon. Moreover, as she was an unofficial

biographer, she had encountered not just a 30-year rule to protect the archives but the royal 100-year rule. She obviously still resented Palace secrecy. In 1936, she said, the British public was kept in ignorance until ten days before Edward VIII's abdication, and in 1990 we still believed in the fairy-tale marriage of the Princess of Wales. But secrecy always led to trouble, she concluded — and she thought that her biography showed that the Queen was more likeable than had ever been revealed.

Philip Ziegler, who wrote the official biography of Edward VIII,

had to admit he had enjoyed the opportunities exclusively granted him in the royal archives. "I felt like a schoolboy let loose in the greatest sweetshop in the world," he said. Nor had he had much problem from the Palace about saying unfavourable things, but perhaps that was because his subject was Edward VIII. The "big black hole" for royal biographers, he thought, was the complete silence on the meetings that monarchs had with their prime ministers. Even Harold Wilson, who would talk about everything else, would not talk about those. But Mr Wilson en-

joyed them. He said the Queen was the only person with whom he could discuss state affairs who was not after his job. Lady de Bellaigue chimed in here — she said records of George V's meetings could be seen, but George VI had not actually allowed any notes to be taken. Hugo Vickers, the third speaker, has been interested in the monarchy since he was a boy at Eton, when he spent all his spare time in Windsor Castle and built a model of it. He too had encountered secrecy when proposing to write a biography of Princess Marina: nobody had wanted to help him

and he had given up. However, now that he was writing one about Prince Philip's mother, Princess Andrew of Greece, people were being more obliging. All the time these musings on royal biography were going on, I felt a certain seething and rumbling among the audience, and finally the question that was troubling them broke forth. Did the speakers approve of the media treatment of the Royal Family, and did they not feel they contributed to it? There was now a little more unease on the platform. All the speakers roundly condemned the

hounding of the young royals, but they were all historians, they said, and had to be glad of any facts that came out. Nor did they know what could be done about it — "the public interest is so violent," said Bradford. Would it all lead to a rebirth of republicanism? asked one speaker. Grigg joined in reassuringly, recalling that 120 years ago many leading politicians were republicans, while none was now.

And what about those television interviews by the Prince and Princess of Wales? Vickers got the biggest laugh and applause of the evening when he said, "I would have preferred it if they had just told me."

In the view of the royal historians, it seems, it is best to keep the goats out of the royal pastures — but the sheep may safely graze.

White coat, dark soul

■ CARRIERS
By Patrick Lynch
Mandarin paperback
original, £5.99

■ VERTICAL RUN
by Joseph R. Garber
Simon & Schuster, £9.99

■ THE ASSESSOR
By Iain Gately
Sinclair-Stevenson, £14.99

THE search for new villains since the end of the Cold War has ranged high and low. While renegade Nazis and President Saddam Hussein remain the hoary old favourites, a few new authors have been casting the net wider: from medical laboratories to City boardrooms.

Carriers is a relatively straightforward example of the "killer virus" genre. The moral dilemma which gives *Carriers* its twist, however, is how society can cope with a lethal, incurable disease that may be carried by an innocent who remains immune.

That very question is one that should be plaguing Dave Elliot when he jogs to the office one morning to find his boss waiting to kill him. And it's downhill from there. Even his wife seems to have it in for him, pointing him out to a mercenary team of assassins, many of whom are fellow Vietnam veterans.

Vertical Run occasionally breaks for cover, but mostly the book lives up to its title by making Elliot the subject of a manhunt up and down a 45-floor New York skyscraper.

The action is relentless, the pace pounding and the plot spins satisfactorily into uncharted *X-Files* waters. Never trust the men in white coats.

In contrast, the "assessor" of the title in Iain Gately's debut novel is the sort of doctor who never comes near a stethoscope. A brilliant pioneer, Sir Charles Barrington is admired within the medical world. But his techniques are discreetly used by the pragmatists of both big business and the law. Sir Charles's skill is that he can provide a clinical analysis of whether a human being is "good" or "bad".

Unsurprisingly, this is a dubious skill in the grey areas of the modern business environment. It would have been interesting, for example, to know what Sir Charles might have made of Robert Maxwell. As it happens, Fraud Squad officers are interested in a City figure who had been the subject of a past "assessment". But when the assessor's home office is burgled and he is left lying in a coma, there are other suspects.

Gately writes always in the first person, switching viewpoints to suit the plot. It is a seductive technique but the stylistic switches are not always radical enough. Nonetheless, *The Assessor* is well crafted and elegant: a good read with more than a hint of sinister psychology to lace the tension. Sometimes the worst enemies are those within.

PETER MILLAR



A wood engraving by Agnes Miller Parker illustrates *Through the Woods* (Frances Lincoln, £16.99). H.E. Bates's evocation of a year in the life of an English woodland

Meet Dalziel and Pascoe

Marcel Berlins on a cop duo whose appearance on TV should bring their writer the attention he deserves

REGINALD Hill is the most unjustly neglected among the premier league of British crime writers. He attracts excellent reviews and has won his fair share of prizes, but he has somehow not broken through into the mass public appreciation that he deserves.

Part of the reason, I'm sure, has to do with the bad luck of not having captured a television series. Many lesser writers have had publicity disproportionate to their talents because they have managed to get their works on to the screen.

That has now changed: Reginald Hill's cop duo Dalziel and Pascoe will shortly be seen on television, and I expect Hill's readership to grow healthily. But if I were to recommend a novel introducing Dalziel and Pascoe to a newcomer to Hill's work, it would not be *The Wood Beyond*. It's not that it's bad — Hill is just not capable of that — it's just that it isn't one of the best.

The Mid-Yorkshire police force's Detective Superintendent Andy Dalziel is a copper of the old no-nonsense school. He's a fat, greedy, rude, unappreciative slob, disliking an alert, incisive mind. Detective Inspector Pascoe



Reginald Hill: the creator of a delightful double-act

■ THE WOOD BEYOND
By Reginald Hill
HarperCollins, £14.99

intelligent, well read, compassionate and married to a right-on feminist. Their double-act — funny, abrasive, antagonistic, yet underneath mutually respectful — is one of the delights of English crime fiction.

In *The Wood Beyond* some human bones are discovered by animal rights protesters near a pharmaceutical research centre. Dalziel (pronounced Dee-El) investigates at first without Pascoe, who is at his grandmother's funeral

learning something that immerses him in a search for the truth about events in the trenches of the First World War.

Dalziel's inquiries lead him into a strange relationship with the rights activist Amanda Marvell, who also happens to be a friend of Pascoe's wife, Ellie.

The characters are, as always, interesting and believable, but the interspersing of Pascoe's war research with the case of the buried bones doesn't quite gel. Fortunately, the television series will point readers to some of his better novels.

What, with the hip characters, snappy dialogue and journey through the LA scene, we could be watching a film

Of movies and shakers

THE PUBLISHERS are not saying whether R.M. Evers is a he or a she. Everybody else probably knows by now, but I do not, and so I will have to guess female, this book being a pure-bred descendant of the *Thelma and Louise* line of way-to-go, a woman-gets-her-own-back revenge fantasy.

And, like its recent cinematic ancestor, this is a wonderfully watchable tale.

I say watchable because, like many contemporary novels, *Shooting Elvis* is filmic in dialogue, plot, action, location and character. It is particularly strong on the first one — there

are some cracking lines — good on the next three, and does enough on the last one to raise it well above the level of pulp fiction.

Shooting Elvis is set in Los Angeles, somewhere which is "about being somebody you weren't to begin with", and that is what Mary Baker, the small-town daughter of an abusive blue-collar father, becomes when she unwittingly sets off a bomb in the airport, goes on the run, and turns

■ SHOOTING ELVIS
(Confessions of an
Accidental Terrorist)
By R.M. Evers
Macmillan, £14.99

herself into Nina Zero, 1990s feminist heroine.

Her journey takes her through the LA scene, a scene by now more familiar to British readers than, say, Manchester, although most of us

have never physically been in it. This scene is full of film stock characters (heart-of-gold private eyes, deceitful Hollywood wannabes, fraudulently hip artists, psychopathically ruthless killers), film stock objects (Harleys, pick-ups, guns, leather jackets) and film stock themes (everybody wants their 15 minutes of fame, the mainstream of society is as amoral as its underbelly, violence has a peculiarly pleasant and precious cathartic val-

ue, the American dream has not come true etc).

All of the above, when joined together with some craftsmanship, or even not very much craftsmanship, provide a winning formula. The reader can relax, retrieve the images, slot them into the internal video and then spend an agreeable three hours watching them. At the end, you can be gratified that you have read a book rather than nipped down to the local blockbuster, but the content, technique and experience were remarkably similar. Good fun.

ROBERT CRAMPTON

The Times/Dillons Bestsellers

HARDBACK			
		Last week	No.
1 KEN HOM'S HOT WOK BOOK Ken Hom (BBC)	£16.99	0	1
2 CRUISE CHANNEL Julian Barnes (Cape)	£10.99	1	7
3 MAXWELL: THE FINAL YEAR Tom Bower (HarperCollins)	£14.99	9	3
4 ELIZABETH Sarah Bradford (Heinemann)	£20	0	3
5 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE Daniel Goleman (Bloomsbury)	£16.99	2	6
6 DELIA SMITH'S WINTER COLLECTION Delia Smith (BBC)	£15.99	3	19
7 BEACH MUSIC Pat Conroy (Doubleday)	£16.99	7	2
8 UNCOMMON WOMAN: PRINCESS VICKY Hannah Pakula (Weidenfeld & Nicolson)	£24.95	0	1
9 X-FILES BOOK OF THE UNEXPLAINED Vol 1 Jane Goldman (Simon & Schuster)	£15.99	5	15
10 IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ENEMY Elizabeth George (Bantam)	£16.99	0	1
PAPERBACK			
		Last week	No.
1 TRAINSPOTTING Irvine Welsh (Minerva)	£6.99	4	26
2 THE RAINMAKER John Grisham (Arrow)	£5.99	1	4
3 BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE MUSEUM Kate Atkinson (Black Swan)	£5.99	2	7
4 SNOW FALLING ON CEDARS David Guterson (Bloomsbury)	£5.99	5	23
5 LADDER OF YEARS Anne Tyler (Vintage)	£5.99	6	3
6 THE STATE WE'RE IN Will Hutton (Vintage)	£7.99	3	8
7 ACID HOUSE Irvine Welsh (Vintage)	£5.99	7	15
8 FREE TO TRADE Michael Ridpath (Mandarin)	£5.99	0	6
9 FINGERPRINTS OF THE GODS Graham Hancock (Mandarin)	£6.99	14	2
10 THE JUROR George Dawes Green (Bantam)	£5.99	13	8
11 REGENERATION Pat Barker (Penguin)	£6.99	8	15
12 PALGRAVE'S GOLDEN TREASURY ed. Francis Palgrave (Phoenix)	0.60p	0	1
13 THE EYE IN THE DOOR Pat Barker (Penguin)	£6.99	17	14
14 A CELESTINE PROPHECY James Redfield (Bantam)	£7.99	0	14
15 BIRDSONG Sebastian Faulks (Vintage)	£5.99	0	46
16 BREATH OF FRESH AIR Erica James (Phoenix)	£5.99	0	1
17 WRITING HOME Alan Bennett (Faber)	£7.99	0	18
18 GARDENING FROM SCRATCH Gay Search (BBC)	£8.99	10	2
19 LOVE SONNETS William Shakespeare (Phoenix)	£0.60	19	2
20 THE ROSE REVIVED Katie Ford (Penguin)	£5.99	0	1

Any book from this list can be ordered from Dillons Mail Order Tel: 0171 636 1577 Fax: 0171 580 7600

DILLONS

There is no escape from oddballs behind closed doors

Neighbourhood watch

NO MAN can be an island, or even write an encyclopaedia about islands, when his front-door bell is always ringing. Frank Savage was blown up and shot while serving in Northern Ireland. When he discharges himself from hospital, his remedy for the residual depression and shock is to hole up in a featureless flat high above London. He will venture out only after dark. No one will know he is there. He will occupy himself by making a methodical catalogue of all the islands of the world, in alphabetical order.

Kensington Heights seems the ideal bolt hole. It is a towering 1890s block in an anonymous neighbourhood, with creaking lifts and largely creaking residents. Savage is on the top floor, far out of reach of traffic noise and passers by. The estate agent assures him of privacy.

But, facing his windows across the central well, lives Miss Bombazine, a "charismatic" who entertains male clients without drawing her blinds. Mr Kostelanez, his landlord, seems to be a spy whose murky contacts have not been informed that he has



Leslie Thomas: a jolly work

■ KENSINGTON HEIGHTS
By Leslie Thomas
Methuen, £15.99

moved out. A Miss Blenkinsop would like to show him where her husband is buried in the basement. The police want to know if he is planning to use his lofty perch to shoot down royal helicopters. He has callers, day and night. He is irredeemably beset by neighbours.

I lived in a block that could have modelled for Kensington Heights when I was a child. The only neighbour who visit-

ed regularly was trying (unsuccessfully) to rouse up protest against the music that pounded the floor from what was then Biba's boutique. I wouldn't now, but I thought she was pretty odd in those days, and I've no problem at all envisaging the rest of Thomas's cast of crazies lurking behind other closed doors. Although they always hover on the brink of parody, they seem perfectly credible. The trouble with Thomas's novels is usually with the straight men, who can be dull and wooden in comparison.

But not Savage. His illness is real and terrible, his depression painfully described. He must travel a far-from-smooth road to salvation before he can safely abandon his lonely magnum opus.

This is a moving and jolly book, rose-tinted as always with this author, but with hardly a dull moment and difficult not to be cheered by. Bad things do happen to people in Thomas's books, but human contact — nosy, bossy, dotty and intrusive — will always save them in the end.

ROSE WILD

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Victorian treats to fill a cupboard

WHEN so many picture books are either too big or too small, *The Book Cupboard* is a pleasant surprise. Orion has reproduced six interesting 19th-century picture books from the Bodleian Library, Oxford, as miniature paperbacks, and slotted them into a single hard cover (sensibly sized) which folds out, triptych-fashion, into a charming *trompe l'oeil* bookcase (designed by Ian Butterworth) crammed with children's classics.

So the real books — illustrated nursery or nonsense rhymes by Lear, Greenaway, Caldecott et al — are protected from being lost or chewed while (who knows?) the titles on the spines of the *trompe l'oeil* books could one day kindle youthful curiosity. At £9.99 they are a lovely gift for a baby or pre-schooler.

In *Hilda Hen's Scary Night* (Gollancz, £3.99) Mary Worrrell evokes the early days of colour printing by using line-cut illustrations. They are strong and bold but graceful, and Hilda's story is a joy for all under-fives.

Richly coloured paper collage is used to great effect by the American artist Debra Frasier in *On The Day You Were Born* (Barefoot Books, £8.99). It tells of the wonders of the Earth in terms that under-fives can enjoy and is attractive in a New Age, Newbury-bypass sort of way.

Martin Rowson's pictures for Anna Clarke's *The Nodland Express* (Macmillan, £7.99) would be so much nicer if he did not draw people with horrible, round, staring eyes. Otherwise, this imagina-

tive excursion by rail into the land of dreams is full of witty detail: two children with the impeccably Islingtonian names of Isaac and Maude find themselves at bedtime in an old-fashioned train. They pull up sleepily at Nodland Central Station (which boasts "Glass of Water Office" and a "Tucking-up Office") after kindly customs officials have turned all undesirable — nightmares, witches, wolves — off the train. For under seven.

Another night excursion, with gentler pictures by Prue Berthon, takes little Rosella and her dog to the ends of the universe in Rosalynne Greenaway's *Ladder to the Stars* (Barefoot Books, £8.99). Rosella's stargazing meetings with a spirit and a hooded old man are vaguely mystical, and it is not surprising to find that the author is a Jungian student with links to the Rudolph Steiner movement.

Two to five-year-old fans of Richard Fowler's pop-in-the-slot books will love *Little Chick's Big Adventure* (Doubleday, £5.99). The successful formula of "popping" a character into slots on each page to create the story helps little ones to feel in charge. A "paper-engineered" book for older, more careful hands (six plus) is Robert Crowther's highly ingenious *Pop-Up Olympics* (Walker, £12.99); if you must buy an Olympics book this year, this one would be most fun. Pull tabs to make the gymnasts somersault and the swimmers race — almost as good as being there.

SARAH JOHNSON

BOOKS

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Drawing on a tortured past

Sinister yet extremely funny, this first novel is a brilliant portrait of a psychopathic breakdown, says Mary Loudon

Gregory Lynn — 35 years old, an orphan, bachelor, only child from the age of four and a half — has one brown eye, one green. His sister Janice dies of meningitis, aged seven. His mother miscarries her third baby, and he watches. His father dies when he is 11. At school he is laughed at, called weird.

Gregory begins a diary, not of words but pictures, in which the formative events in his life are carefully and accurately depicted. Later, when his mother dies, Gregory discovers a clutch of less-than-average school reports in the attic, revealing to him the brutality and the haphazardness of judgment passed upon one person by another.

Paranoid and wounded, Gregory

becomes obsessed with order, logic and a sense, however skewed, of justice. He decides to seek out his old school teachers to put things right, and the pictures change: representation becomes re-presentation; demonstration becomes a revision of events.

Drawing, for Gregory, offers no release from the pain of the past but it does provide a means by which the future might be controlled. By drawing things, says Gregory, sometimes you can make them happen. So Gregory draws alternative outcomes, the sort of thing that a counsellor

ACTS OF REVISION
By Martyn Bedford
Bantam Press, £14.99

might encourage in occupational therapy. Except that Gregory's alternative outcomes all involve torture.

Acts of Revision is a brilliant portrait of a psychopathic breakdown which, as anyone who has ever been near even the mildly psychotic will recognise, is in fact much less of a breakdown than a build-up: a build-up of an enormous barrier.

The barrier is constructed from

pain and anger, held together with logic, and made flexible enough that anyone coming up against it will simply bounce off. It might be warped, bent out of shape, but it is impenetrable.

When Gregory is charged with acts of violence, he draws a picture of his barrister attempting to push through a thin black line which divides them. The barrister fails. This is because he cannot see that for Gregory it is understanding, and not misunderstanding, which lies at the heart of his

need to commit acts of revision. Gregory — who has sexually assaulted one teacher and posted to another hundreds of cut-up words "loose in the envelope so that when [he] opens it they flutter about him like confetti" — relishes "this lack of communication, this failure of language between us. It's the one way he will learn to appreciate my point of view."

Martyn Bedford has produced an exceptional first novel. He is a clever and stylish writer: his prose is enormously controlled. This does not mean that Bedford lacks guts or passion — there is plenty of both in *Acts of Revision*, most of it ghoulish. This is a profoundly sinister work, and all the more so for being wildly funny too.



Scruton: excellent introduction and meaty reflection

MODERN PHILOSOPHY
An Introduction and Survey
By Roger Scruton
Mandarin, £6.99

THIS IS Scruton's pay-off mix. Despite the title and Scruton's insistence that there are no "central questions in philosophy", this volume is very much like A.J. Ayer's *Central Questions in Philosophy* in that it is based on a series of lectures; it also provides an overview of philosophical constructions and all the old favourites, albeit with the emphasis on the 20th century.

Perhaps its genesis explains its immediacy. *Modern Philosophy's* strength lies in it being both an excellent introduction to the subject and a meaty reflection on it. Clear and witty (Scruton is marvellously witty about the French: "deconstruction deconstructs itself, and disappears up its own behind, leaving only a disembodied smile and a faint smell of sulphur"), Scruton is also polemical without distorting the subject matter. You won't always agree with Scruton, but at least you'll be able to understand him and, despite the book's length, there are no longwinded.

A considerable study guide is appended to the book should you want to delve further, and even re-reading it made me itch to get to a good library. If you are only going to read one book on Modern Philosophy, you should read this one. Tasty food for thought.

CARRY ME LIKE WATER
By Benjamin Alire Saez
Headline, £6.99

MOVING between California and the US-Mexican border, this extraordinary first novel explores the fluidity of the boundaries of race, culture and society in the face of the individual's need for lasting human relationships. The novel is peopled by characters in a post-Aids world, enacting a dark Shakespearean comedy of disguised origins and separated siblings. A desire for reconciliation — even of the dead with their native land — is fulfilled in a close-knit community of family and friends on the El Paso border.



PLAYLAND

PLAYLAND
By John Gregory Dunne
Granta, £6.99

SCREENWRITER Jack Broderick is researching a film on Detroit lowlife when he stumbles across Blue Tyler, 1940s child star, living in a trailer-park. In his growing obsession with her career, he lifts the veil on 1940s and 1950s Hollywood to reveal the corruption underneath. Dunne has produced a cast of strong characters, catching the squalid, feid atmosphere of the film industry past and present.

WHAT WE DID ON OUR HOLIDAYS
By Geoff Nicholson
Quartet, £7

ERIC the accountant decides that what his family needs to

pull them out of their rut is a nice caravan holiday. In a *Wish You Were Here* script by Hieronymus Bosch he catches his trim and attractive wife Kathleen in *flagrant* with two dwarves, narrowly escapes being sacrificed by his teenage son who has gone native and is forgiven by a daughter who has embraced religion. Bullying by a policeman who cries at Mozart at last pushes him over the edge, and he exacts a satisfying revenge.

A SAFE CONDUCT
By Peter Vansittart
Peter Owen, £9.95

SET IN the tumultuous final years of the Middle Ages in a European principality, this remarkable novel evokes a world rife with fear, superstition and violence. The Graf, in the lofty fastness of his castle, watches the peasantry who in turn regard him with suspicion and resentful loyalty. Then into this closed world comes a tide of change that will eventually bring the Reformation and the modern age. Vansittart's lucid prose is a delight and full of images that conjure up a world of cold, mysterious magic.

How scarred is my Welsh valley

STATE OF DESIRE
By Catherine Merriman
Macmillan, £15.99

DEATH and sex are often said to lie back to back. Catherine Merriman's new novel, *State of Desire*, is a highly charged exploration of the sexual crisis which overwhelms Jenny Parsons at the end of her first year of widowhood. Throughout the novel Merriman creates an atmosphere of risk-taking sexuality and of desire without an ounce of romance in it.

State of Desire is set in the Welsh valleys, and the first rugby international without her husband has been as tough for Jenny as any personal anniversary. In her late thirties, she has not expected widowhood. Merriman skilfully links the changes in Jenny's private landscape to the threatened despoliation of the mountain above her cottage, where British Coal plans an opencast mine.

Like Merriman herself, Jenny is an English incomer who has come to love the valleys' blend of natural beauty and post-industrial scarring. Jenny begins an intense affair with a young man closer to her son's age than her own and, as her involvement deepens, so does her interest in the campaign against the opencast mine. But this is a closed, inter-related community which demands concealment in exchange for a blind eye turned to the discreet.

With her lover, Jenny decides to film the mountain top as evidence that this cannot be dismissed as low-grade, disposable land. She imagines that she controls the lens, but she herself is being filmed, and the images which will later be exposed are startling. A weakness of *State of Desire* is that Jenny's grief for her husband and the texture of her lost marriage are not convincing. The letters she writes to her dead husband read as a device to convey information and move the plot forward.

However, Merriman is on home ground for most of this novel. Christmas-tree factories may have replaced deep mines in the Welsh valleys, but the landscape remains unique, and Merriman weaves it into the texture of her fiction without sentimentality or caricature.

HELEN DUNMORE



A 1930 photograph from *Dockland Life* (Mainstream, £20) shows workmen on swinging stages painting the counter stern of a ship in dry dock

Flesh versus faith

TIME was when women were not, as St Augustine would have it, in God's image. Julia O'Faolain's fat anthology devoted to male fulminations throughout the centuries provides the examples. Even so, from St Agatha to St Zita, women have proved remarkably faithful to a dismissive God, while men have proved remarkably faithful to the flesh.

This paradox is apparent in the 15-year-old marriage of Flora and Simon. Having talked Flora out of her Roman Catholicism, television film director Simon, more or less content with his three children and comfortable home, is worried that the religious bug is resurfacing in Flora.

At the same time, he meets Gillian, an accountant, whose emphasis on autonomy, financial and emotional — and candid (a word used often to describe her) gaze suggest teasing but uncomplicated delights. Simon falls and falls hard: "Sex, after all, is an

As a husband succumbs to temptation, his wife is seduced by religion

A PURE CLEAR LIGHT
By Madeleine St John
Fourth Estate, £12.99

awful lot more than it's cracked up to be."

While Simon succumbs to temptation, Flora, shaken by a sense that something is wrong, picks her way to the door of the Anglican church and is made welcome by the vicar and his thoroughly modern wife, a theological don. So she is attending services on Sunday.

Patronising and busy negotiating an emotional — as opposed to spiritual — odyssey, Simon, nevertheless, loves

his cool, suffering wife enough to shut up. Inevitably, he and Gillian are rumoured by one of Flora's friends.

"There's a lot to be said for the rules," comments another friend, and this slender, pared-to-the-bone but substantial novel offers justification for this contention. Religion offers the sanctuary of defined limits and an additional bonus of faith, leaving those outside to envy its rigour and riches. As Flora concludes: unlike a husband, belief in God gives scope for the benefit of the doubt.

Like toffee, *A Pure Clear Light* should be chewed over, not swallowed in a lump. Not one word is wasted by the author, who clearly despises ornamentation and is ruthless in driving her narrative forward. A triumph of the minimalist, it appraises love, both sacred and profane, desire, pain and the disappointments of this earth with a laser eye.

ELIZABETH BUCHAN

All about Eve's woe

A hilarious portrait of a daughter, wife and mother in a crisis

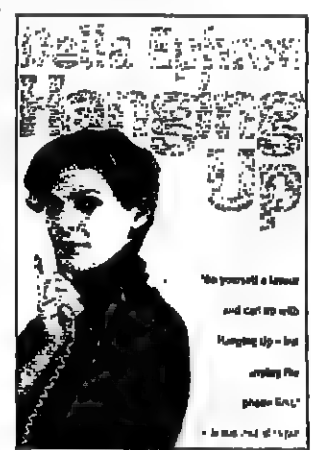
DYSFUNCTIONAL does not begin to describe the Moez family. For a start, the generations are upside down: the parents, Patricia and Lou, behave like children, leaving their daughters, Georgia, Eve and Maddy, no choice but to grow up too fast. The three girls have to take care of themselves and from an early age look after Lou, a plaintive alcoholic who is as demanding as a baby, without a baby's appeal.

The burden of being her father's keeper falls mainly on Eve, the middle daughter and the novel's narrator. Unfortunately for her, she has missed out on the airy self-absorption that her two sisters have developed as armour.

Georgia edits a glossy magazine named after her, and, while Eve is coping with Lou's bizarre and terminal decline in Los Angeles, stays in New York putting out the tenth anniversary issue: "A complete nightmare — I can't possibly convey what I'm going through." Maddy is similarly unhelpful.

The action swoops backwards and forwards, charting the progress of Lou's craziness: overdoses, hasty marriages, breakdowns and temporary incarcerations in psychiatric units. Wherever he is, he telephones Eve umpteen times a day, a sure way to drive her as mad as he is.

When he does not phone, she worries that he might be dead and Eve fears death as much as madness. Although her husband Joe is reassuring and her teenage son, Jesse, is sweet-natured, Eve has dark



A novel that makes you laugh and cry by turns

HANGING UP
By Della Ephron
Fourth Estate, £9.99

dreams of leaving as her mother did before her because, as Patricia once explained, "I turned 45".

You cannot blame Eve for wanting out: she is horribly over-burdened, not only by Lou but by her job organising conferences in unlikely venues. Her current project is a meeting of ear, nose and throat doctors in the Nixon library, complete with models of Nixon's daughters in their wedding outfits.

Ephron's portrait of a woman in crisis is both heart-wrenching and hilarious. With a series of snapping one-liners, she can turn the subject of disintegrating old age into a laughing matter that threatens to make you cry.

PENNY PERRICK

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Sex, drugs and a daily paper

IMAGINE a recreational drug with almost Faustian properties. Something to keep you permanently slim, permanently happy and sexually tireless. Such a drug, called White Doves, is at the heart of Sally Beauman's new romantic thriller, a classic Friday-night read.

What you need at that time are not bleak insights into the human heart but glamour, excitement, exotic back-grounds, hardening nipples, and true love always winning through. It's all there as Sally Beauman takes us authoritatively into the worlds of Parisian high fashion and a national daily paper, two places where it seems everybody is after those White Doves.

Take Jean Lazare, enigmatic and power-mad head of the multimillion fashion house, Cazares. Are the drugs for him or for his designer and partner, the gifted but

DANGER ZONES
By Sally Beauman
Bantam Press, £15.99

increasingly unstable Maria? Then there's Star, the beautiful, depraved supplier of this drug, who believes that he has his own personal account to settle with that enigmatic couple.

Finally there's our hero: the green-eyed, black-haired Rowland McGuire, features editor and scourge of the female subs at Wapping. His own crusade for declaring war on drug traffickers is fuelled by the loss of his girlfriend, six years ago, in a drugs-related accident. However, this is not his only



Beauman: absorbing read

crusade. Mysteriously, this incident seems to have given Rowland permission to wreak havoc on female hearts across two continents. Allegedly a five-times-a-night man (with

no chemical aids whatsoever), he eschews all involvement, allowing women only six weeks in his life. At the very first use of the "d" word (daring) the morning after, he's into his old tweed trousers before you can say commitment.

But Nemesis is awaiting Rowland in the person of Gini Hunter, a top feature writer but burnt out after Bosnia, whom he sends on the track of these elusive drugs. There's a terrific climax in every sense, set against a Paris driven into a frenzy by the seasonal collections, when the true effects of the White Doves are discovered and all scores settled.

Danger Zones is compulsively readable and utterly engrossing — one of those books which hooks you from page one until you reluctantly surrender it in the small hours of Saturday morning.

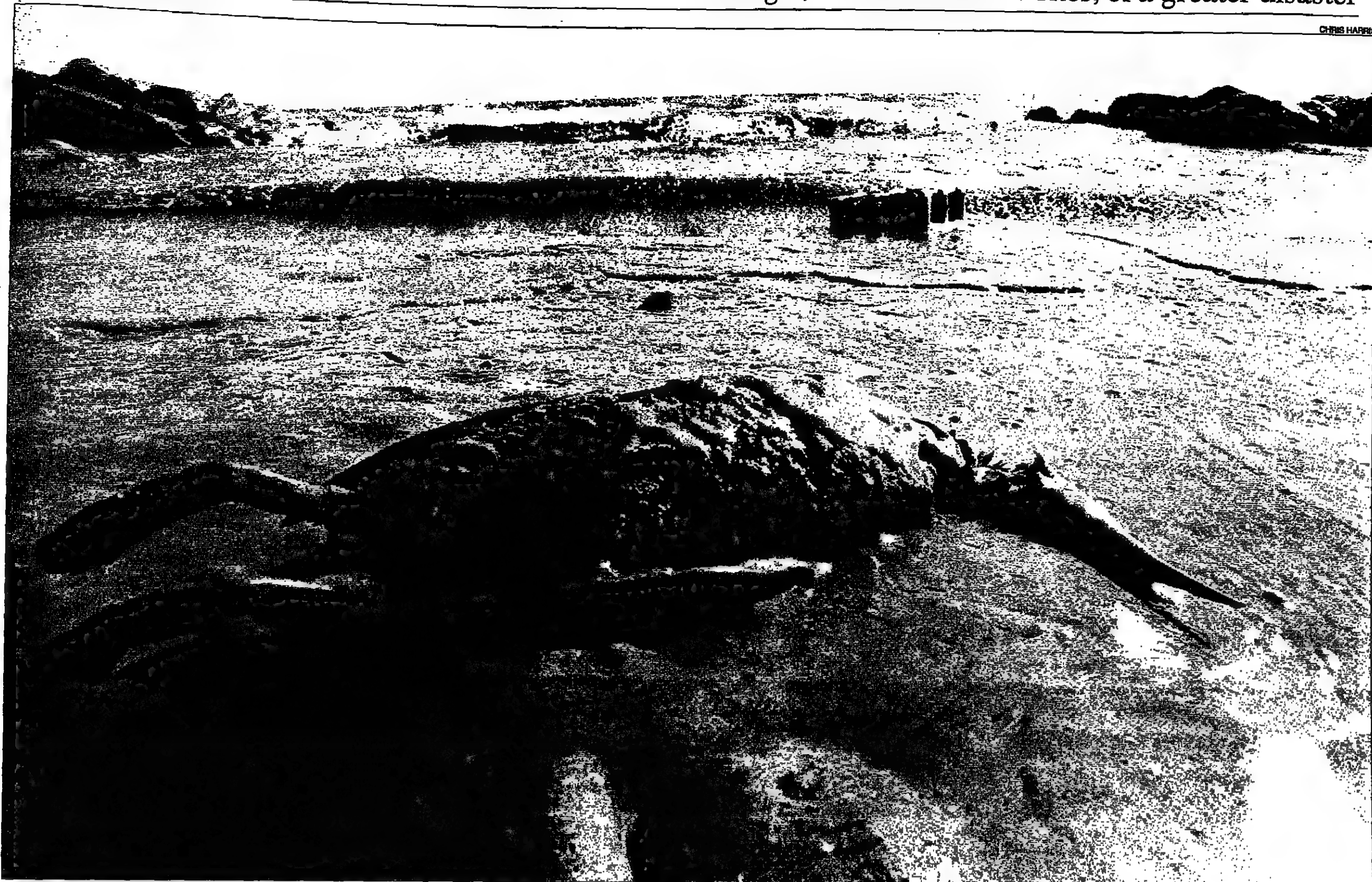
FRANCES DONNELLY

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OUTDOORS

15 3

An oil-soaked guillemot lies dead on a Welsh shore: a harbinger, Simon Barnes writes, of a greater disaster



Thousands of birds and mammals have been doomed to lingering deaths by an oil spill that, conservationists say, could and should have been prevented. The birds drown slowly; even the ones that struggle ashore often die of exhaustion

Oddly enough, the first reaction is not anger or despair, or even compassion. It is to feel slightly dizzy: that touch of vertigo that comes when the brain refuses to process information provided by the senses.

We know about the sea. It goes swish. But here, the sea was going gloop. The waves were not waving, the rollers were not rolling. Instead, the sea stirred about languorously, like a cat in the sun: slow movements, smooth, rather velvety.

Oil turns the sea into something else, and the brain wants to reject the prospect of this transformation. It is surreal: a hallucination. And a flash from Hunter S. Thompson came to me: "No. Las Vegas is not a good place for psychedelic drugs. Reality itself is too twisted."

You don't expect to recall such words in Carmarthen Bay. But down in West Wales, reality has been severely twisted. Velvet ripples, sepia coloured, are glooping onto the shore: a Dali parody of real sea. But don't worry. It's just the latest oil spill. A little gift from a ship called *Sea Empress*.

And then the smell gets you. Not actively unpleasant if you didn't know what it meant: a sultry afterglow, perhaps. But it's not the briny: it's not the salt air that tastes of childhood.

There is no mistaking the next sensation: disgust. Not intellectual disgust: the response is visceral. Ugh. It comes from the roots of your being: your entire genealogy, as a member of an island

nation, is expressed in this brief soul's cry.

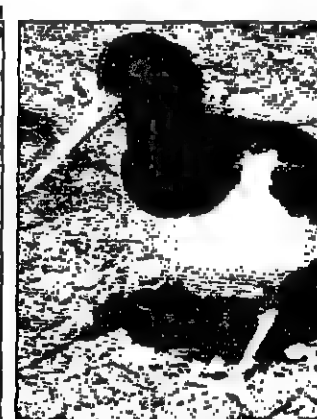
There are plenty of disasters, though. We suffer from disaster fatigue. The cry of Save the Whales has become a joke: and what do rain forests mean to us dwellers in a northern land? Most disasters are subtle and cumulative: acid rain, global warming. We cannot get stirred emotionally, still less physically, by such things. But this is different. A single gloop is a sermon in ecological damage.

I saw my first common scoter on Staines Reservoir, in Surrey. It is a bleak place, where they have a special kind of wind, designed to freeze off all but deranged persons with binoculars. The bird was about a million miles away, a black dot bobbing and diving behind black wavelets.

I caught it in the telescope: shiny black, yellow-beaked: the low, compact shape of a diving duck. It made my day. I saw many numbers of scoters in Carmarthen Bay. They made me sick.

Scoters should not really be out by themselves on Staines reservoir in the winter. They should be sitting on the sea in vast numbers. This area of coast holds them by the thousand. Up to 25,000 at one time: seven or eight thousand have been seen this winter.

It is not hard to guess what happens to a bird that earns its living by sitting on the sea, when the sea is covered in oil. The sight is unimaginably pathetic. Oil is capricious stuff, sent hither and thither



In Carmarthen Bay Hundreds of scoters, left, and oystercatchers, right, are dead; seals on Skomer are threatened

by shifting winds, breaking up into slicks. Here, at a place called — nice bit of irony — Wiseman's Bridge, there was a scoter just beyond the line of breakers: a scoter as I've never seen a duck before.

It was swimming along with an air of purpose, in a proper duck-like way. But all you could see was the head and neck. No: there was the back, showing every now and again above the surface. Another impossible sight: ducks don't sink. But this one was going down with all hands.

And then another scoter: also behaving as no duck should. This was one indulging in a manic head-shaking. Again and again it shook its head like a man trying to shake water from his ears. But oil doesn't shake worth a damn.

Oystercatchers are the most handsome and recognisable of shore-birds. They are immensely dapper: a dazzling contrast of black and white. But the oystercatchers of Carmarthen Bay are hardly handsome at all. A brown breast isn't half as smart as a white one.

A shag landed on the water in front of me. They look like cormorants but, when they dive from the surface, they do

a little jump first. Again and again, the shag jumped, dived. It was like being at a pantomime: you wanted to shout: "Oil! Look behind you." With oil all around, the shag dived and dived.

The beaches were full of life. It was like a Bank Holiday. It was a lovely day; people were everywhere. They were out gathering birds: the dead and the dying. "We got about 70 this morning," said one of these volunteers, young, female, sinking. "Live ones, I mean. Don't know how many dead. Trouble is, you catch one, and it goes and dies on you."

They come to the shore to escape the sea: once on shore, they flap themselves into exhaustion trying to escape their rescuers. As they are running on empty already, the rescue

can be the last straw. Scoters are notoriously nifty birds anyway: always liking to keep a good stretch of sea (or reservoir) between them and you. The disaster might have been custom-made to kill them.

And in Carmarthen Bay, they have so far collected 2,000 scoters: oiled, but alive. Also 500 dead ones. There are 500 other species also found alive: another 500 dead. Most of these last half-thousand are guillemots, the north's miniature flying penguins.

They have done great stuff, these volunteers. The RSPCA has been cleaning up the birds. Other conservation bodies have been passing on volunteers: the co-operation between all the conservation organisations involved has been cheering. The Dyfed Wildlife

Trust, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) are girding their loins for the coming public enquiry.

Along the beaches, the Welsh being as good at disaster as the English, there is a cheery Blitz spirit. But behind it, a murderous anger. "Fed up with being lied to." "Why is nobody clearing up the oil?" "How many more disasters will it take before something is done?" "It's not as if they haven't been warned."

The reason we go birdwatching, rather than earthworm-watching, is that birds are obvious. Like us, they respond to colour and sound. And because they are obvious, they are the best indicators of what is happening. A good population of birds, with birds

of prey on top, means that there is not much wrong with that particular bit of planet.

When things go wrong with birds, it generally means there is something rotten deep in the system. All birds are the canaries down the mine: birds are the first to tell us when things have gone amiss.

And so it is with Carmarthen Bay. The poor scoters are but the tip of an iceberg of troubles. The sea is more than scoters: and the entire area of the oil spill is, or was, an area of peculiar richness. It is a fine place for the big sea-going mammals: seals, dolphins, porpoises. Seals come ashore on Skomer Island — right in the middle of the shipping lane — to pup every autumn. There are about 100 born each year. In the past week, there have been several sightings of seals coming up for air in oiled water. Oil damages where it does not kill: it is feared the spill will affect the seals' long-term reproductive success.

As for the dolphins, they too have been seen surfacing in oil. Hard facts here are elusive: you can monitor the shore with ease, but monitoring the open sea is all but impossible. There is a delicate and secret life beneath the waves: the area has such delights as jewel anemones, soft corals, burrowing sea cucumbers and sea squirts. These cannot fail to be affected.

This is an area of particular natural richness and particular vulnerability. It is tricky navigational: and very, very busy. Everyone knew all this: has known it for years. Only a few months ago, another tanker, the *Borga*, ended up on the rocks in a near carbon-copy of the accident with *Sea Empress*. The *Borga* was double-hulled: there was no spillage. It was an awful warning: it was not heeded. The *Sea Empress* was not double-hulled.

There are three big local industries around the area of

the spill: oil, fishing, tourism. The livelihoods of people in two of these industries are obviously affected by the disaster. Presumably this is considered an acceptable risk. And, as we have seen only too vividly, and once again, the environment has been traded off against profit.

A recent poll from the Department of the Environment showed that 86 per cent of people in England and Wales are "concerned" about the environment. And yet the issue slips ever lower down the political agenda. And another tanker goes aground.

It could have been avoided. The public inquiry into the affair of *Sea Empress* should hear that the disaster would not have happened in the United States or Norway.

The US, learning from the affair of the *Exxon Valdez*, has taken unilateral action and declared that no new tankers will be allowed in US waters unless they have double-hulls. Existing tankers may continue, but only with clean-up teams on stand-by. And they will be fully liable for the cost of any environmental damage caused by a spill.

In Norway is it standard practice in Oslo fjords to have a pilot on board a tanker six hours out of port. A big tanker will also be escorted by tugs. Had this been the case with *Sea Empress*, the disaster would not have happened.

I walked away from the sea, my feet making little sticking and unsticking noises, as if I were walking on Elastoplast. Another disaster, I thought. Who cares? But I knew the answer: practically everyone. Why, then, does the environment get shoved down the list of priorities?

I felt like the man waiting for a bus. I missed the last major ecological disaster. Never mind, there'll be another one along in a minute.



The clean-up begins, in a cheery Blitz spirit

NEXT WEEK

What makes the British so bad at recycling?
Sailing: up the Thames in a gale

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BRITAIN: A peaceful retreat in Herefordshire; and the winner of the Salute to Folk Art prize



Hope End nestles in 40 acres of listed 18th-century parkland with a plethora of splendid walks. None of the rooms has TV or radio, and peace is guaranteed

The market town of Ledbury seems to be stuck in time since its last visit more than 30 years ago. It has changed but a jot. Perhaps a spell was cast in the 17th century and the town has slumbered on in the Welsh Marches, forgotten by time, save for the arrival of sliced bread, chicken-in-a-basket and that modern thorn in the flesh, the motor car.

At one end of the High Street is the grandest black-and-white house in Herefordshire, dated 1590, which was Prince Rupert's HQ during the Battle of Ledbury in 1645, when Royalist troops surprised a Roundhead advance from Gloucester. Even the tourist board leaflet admits nothing as exciting has happened in Ledbury since.

At the other end, near the Norman parish church, the Market House teeters impossibly on rickety stilts. It was built as a corn market between 1617 and 1655, is attributed to the King's Carpenter, John Abel, and still protects market stall-holders from the elements. In between is an array of old-fashioned shops and the Feathers Hotel in grand 16th-century top-heavy black and white.

Ledbury does have two literary claims to fame. The former Poet Laureate John Masefield was born here in 1878, orphaned, and brought up by an uncle until he went to sea at 13. Elizabeth Barrett Browning came to live in a tranquil

valley near Ledbury with her family in 1809, when she was three. Her father bought an estate at Hope End, four miles southwest of the Malvern Hills, but did not like the mid-18th century house and built a new one in Moorish style, complete with minarets and turrets, though not all remains.

Hope End — now a hotel owned by John Hegarty, a former solicitor, and his wife Patricia, a former teacher — is a fine place for a peaceful weekend break. Hope is the old English word for a closed valley, and the house is at its closed end. But guests craving peace and quiet might call this place Hope Realised. The hotel is reached via a long drive and has only eight bedrooms, none of them with TV or radio. It features in the French guidebook of the Relais du Silence, which recommends ten high-quality hotels in Britain especially for peace and quiet.

The warm redbrick house nestles in 40 acres of listed 18th-century parkland. At night you can hear the



Ledbury: Civil War echoes

beat of an owl's wing, and only the moon and stars light the secret valley. From our bedroom window at dawn, we watched entranced as a young fox gambolled on a frosted grass bank.

We drove to Upton upon Severn, another ancient town, and imagined hazy summer days at the pubs by the great river. On the return

trip we passed Eastnor Castle, where the TV version of *Little Lord Fauntleroy* was filmed. It looks like a fairytale prince's pad and is open to the public. In the distance the lights of the Malvern Hills twinkled in the frosty light.

There are several gardens to visit and pleasant walks. The Daffodil Way, which starts at Dymock, is ripe in March. Vineyards such as the Three Choirs, south of Dymock, make a pleasant diversion, as can cider farms like Lyne Down Farm and Westons Cider, both at Much Marcle, where Hellen's, a 13th-century house still lived in by descendants of the family who built it, is open to the public.

But many Hope End guests just relax in the grounds or in front of a log fire, or walk out from the house: a brief trek up Oyster Hill is rewarded with breathtaking views of the Malverns.

The Hegartys rescued the house from ruin 20 years ago. Mr Hegarty has also restored the 18th-century walled kitchen garden

where he grows organic food for his wife, an accomplished chef, to serve in the restaurant.

Mrs Hegarty's cooking style is light modern English which, combined with old-fashioned, home-grown treats such as cardoons, sea kale, cobnuts, medlars and quince, has won some media attention. Our first dinner included mushroom roulade, followed by a chestnut soufflé accompanied by spinach picked just before the frost fell. Most weeks Patricia will demonstrate a mouth-watering recipe, which should be second nature because she runs cookery courses at the hotel.

CHRISTINE WEBB

• The author was a guest of the Hope End Hotel, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 1UQ (01531 633613). Two-night weekend breaks start at £340 for two people sharing a double room, including dinner and breakfast; last-minute bookings have a standby rate of £99 per room per night; dinner is £30 per person.

• The hotel features in *Fruity Slices*, an eight-part Channel Four series starting next Friday.

• *Relais du Silence*, 2 Passage du Guesclin, 75015 Paris (00 33 44 99000, or ring 01736 766199 for information). The other nine hotels are in Cornwall, Devon, Gloucestershire and Northamptonshire.

• *Eastnor Castle*, Eastnor, Ledbury (01531 633160). Open 11am-5pm, Easter Sunday and Monday, Sundays to July 1, then Sun-Fri. Adults £4, children £2.

TIMES/COCA-COLA COMPETITION

Inspired by Stonehenge

SOME of the most ancient sights of the British countryside inspired the winning entry in *The Times*'s competition to design a Coca-Cola bottle to reflect the spirit of Great Britain, Guy Walters writes.

Coca-Cola Henge, by Brian Anderson, resembles Stonehenge and other standing stones across the British Isles. In his brief, Mr Anderson stated that his piece "combines two artefacts that are both recognised worldwide, while also reflecting the continuity of the Celtic community in Wales".

His design, for the Olympic Salute to Folk Art competition, will be made into an 8ft sculpture to be displayed with other examples from around the world near the Olympic stadium in Atlanta, Georgia, for this year's Games. Mr Anderson, of Dyfed, beat more than 300 other entries.

The competition rules stated that work had to be "created, decorated or painted with local materials, using traditional techniques and featuring images that are indigenous to or symbolic of your community". Foreseeing that fashioning the piece from stone would be both impractical and expensive, Mr Anderson says that it will be made from polystyrene and finished to look like stone.

Before turning to sculpture, Anderson was involved in puppet animation, working on children's television shows such as *Fireman Sam* and *Joshua Jones*. He is now taking a part-time course in computer-aided design which he can use to formulate sculptures.

"I'm going through my hardware phase at the moment," he says. "Most of my pieces are made from nails and bits of wood — anything that comes to hand." The idea for *Coca-Cola Henge* came to him in a flash

of inspiration. However, the design was illustrated using scissors and paste rather than a computer.

Mr Anderson wins £5,000 for his design and a trip to the Olympic Games, and the five runners-up each receive £1,000. They are Maria Grant, 21, of Aberdeen, whose design was a granite bottle; Giles Mitchell, 14, of Salisbury, Wiltshire, whose *Cathedrals and Cottages* used stained glass, grass and stones; Emma Jackson, 17, of Holmes Chapel, Cheshire, whose *Ship in a Bottle* is self-explanatory; Peter Faulkner, 42, of Morley, Yorkshire, who used the bottle's shape to form a teapot; and Mimi Rashelshine, 28, of Richmond, Surrey, whose bottle showed images of Britain such as red phone boxes and buses.

The judges were: David Driver, the design editor of *The Times*; Stephen Bayley, the design commentator; Gavin Darby, president of Coca-Cola Northwest Europe; and Simon Clegg, deputy general secretary of the British Olympic Association.



The winning entry: Coca-Cola Henge

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The recent opening of the 4-star Hilton Hotel in Nuweiba now makes it possible to combine the fascinating sites of St Catherine's Monastery, and further exploration of Sinai, with the 'rose red' city of Petra. The journey is further made possible by our direct flight from London Gatwick to Ouda and the regular ferry services to Nuweiba.

Our journey commences with a three night stay on Sinai's Red Sea coast at the Coral Hilton Hotel at Nuweiba. From here we pay a visit to both St Catherine's Monastery and the Coloured Canyon with time for relaxation before taking the ferry service to Aqaba and onwards to Petra for four nights.

Besides the 4-star Hilton at Nuweiba, accommodation has been reserved at the 4-star Forum Hotel in Petra. The journey concludes with a drive across the newly opened border to Ouda for the return flight to London Gatwick.

The Monastery of St Catherine has attracted pilgrims since AD 337 when the Empress Helena, mother of Constantine, ordered the building of a sanctuary around the site of the Burning Bush. Its spectacular setting at the foot of Mt Sinai adds to the solitude and mystery of the site.

Petra was lost to the world after a change in well established trading routes but was re-discovered by the famous Swiss explorer Burckhardt in 1812. Since then, the area, half as old as time, has been a magnet for generations of travellers wishing to see and experience a truly unique city.

Itinerary
Day 1 Fly from London Gatwick airport with Air 2000 direct to Ouda on Airbus 310 taking about 5 hours. Drive to the Coral Hilton Hotel for a three-night stay.

Day 2 Today make a full day excursion to Mt Sinai and the Monastery of St Catherine. The monastery and the area have changed little since it was built on the site where Moses encountered the Burning Bush. At the monastery see the fortress, the church of the Emperor Justinian (the main church), the Well of Moses and the Gallery of Icons. Also see the delightful garden.

Day 3 In the morning there will be an excursion through the spectacular Sinai scenery to the Coloured Canyon and other sights on the way. Remainder of the day at leisure in Nuweiba.

Day 4 Travel by ferry to Aqaba and driven north to Petra, stronghold of the Nabataeans from the 3rd century BC until its conquest by Rome in 106 AD. Stay four nights in the 4-star Forum Hotel.

Day 5 Walk through the amazing narrow-winding canyon which is the entrance to the city — and emerge at the impressive looking Treasury (el-Khazne). Climb the sacrificial High Place of the Prophets (Dushara). Also see the Theatre, the Roman Way,

A Visit to the Monastery of St. Catherine and the Rose Red City of Petra



including 3 nights at the 4-star Hilton Hotel at the oasis Red Sea resort of Nuweiba 7 nights from £620.00



the monumental Arch, the Temple, and the Royal Tombs.

Day 6 Return through the city and climb to the Monastery (el-Deir), Petra's largest monument. In the distance are Aaron's Tomb on Mount Hor, and Wadi Petra. Late afternoon optional excursion to Beida. The ruins of the Neolithic village date from 7,000 BC and are said to be

the earliest construction extant. Continue to Little Petra and see the rock tombs.

Day 7 A further day of visiting the sites or optional visits to Wadi Rum, with its dramatic moonscape scenery, or Amman and the well-preserved Roman city of Jerash.

Day 8 Cross over the newly opened

border to Ouda for the return flight to London Gatwick arriving in the late evening.

The Nuweiba Coral Hilton Resort

Set on a 7km sandy beach on the Red Sea, the hotel is an ideal centre from which to visit the spectacular sights of the Sinai. All 200 rooms are air-conditioned with private bath and shower while the public facilities include a choice of restaurants, bars, shops, evening entertainment, swimming pool and a wide variety of leisure and sports facilities.

The Forum International Hotel, Petra

The 4-star Forum Hotel is situated close to Petra. The 149 guest rooms each have private facilities, air-conditioning, TV, radio and minibar. The hotel's facilities include two restaurants, lounge, terrace/pool bar, swimming pool, sauna and shops.

Departure Dates & Prices

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TRAVEL

17

3

CITY BREAKS: Style, charm and a little light music in Vienna; and a walking tour of bustling Lisbon

A night or two at the opera

I went to Vienna in search of melody. When it comes to musical theatre, we British are hopelessly confined. All we ask is a quick round of Andrew Lloyd Webber topped up by Gilbert and Sullivan and an occasional Broadway revival. The rich continental tradition of opera is relegated to tatty productions of *Die Fledermaus* and other holiday specials such as the recent reworking of Offenbach's *La belle Hélène* which, for some mysterious reason, has become *La belle Vivette*.

Forgotten are the Viennese masters of light musical entertainment such as Johann Strauss, Franz Lehar and Emmerich Kalman, who created theatrical experiences of lasting appeal that would still pack the Coliseum or Sadlers Wells if any producer had the wit to see the potential.

Until that happy day, a weekend break in Vienna with visits to the Wiener Volksoper answers the immediate problem — with the bonus of enjoying the style and charm of this inspiring city.

A good time to go to Vienna for opera and other delights is around Easter when the avenues bloom in the spring sunshine.

There are so many treasures within easy walking distance of each other but I will stay faithful to the age of opera and suggest a tour of the best of Jugendstil or Art Nouveau, the turn-of-the-century culture clash that brought artists such as Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele and architects like Otto Wagner to prominence.

Vienna was then a city noted for its rigid class structure and deference to Hapsburg traditions. Yet it was also a city of intellectual ferment where every street café, aloud with argument, was a potential challenge to authority. When the Secession Pavilion (on Friedrichstrasse) was erected for exhibitions of avant-garde art, it was deliberately sited just across from the Academy of Fine Arts, the temple of artistic convention. Its members despised the Secession Pavilion, calling it the "golden cabbage", a reference to the globe that tops this white,

Fact file

□ Barry Turner was a guest of Travellers (0181-427 4449). He stayed at the five-star Hotel Vienna Plaza. Two-night breaks start from £389 per person based on two sharing and includes return flights with Austrian Airlines from Heathrow, transfer on arrival and accommodation with buffet breakfast.

□ The author was a guest of the Austrian Tourist Board at the 4-star Hotel am Stephansplatz (00 43 1 53 4050). B&B in a double room costs from £50 to £70 per person per night.

□ Information and tickets for the Volksoper (00 43 514 41 2960).

□ Austrian National Tourist Office 0171-629 0461.

cube-like building. But it survived as a showcase for Klimt and his friends and, today, houses Klimt's homage to Beethoven's 9th, a delicate and graceful frieze which proclaims art as the source of true happiness.

More of Klimt's work can be seen at the Belvedere, a former royal palace with a panoramic view of the city, the Museum of Modern Art and the Kunsthistorisches Museum on the Ringstrasse, where the great collections of art built up by the Hapsburg monarchs are on permanent display.

Art Nouveau crops up all over Vienna — the distinctive designs seen in cafés, shops and public buildings but most obviously in the eye-catching architecture of Otto Wagner, Joseph Maria Olbrich and Adolf Loos. One example: enjoy the Wagner apartment buildings across from the Naschmarkt. Designed just before the turn of the century, the facades are variously decorated with flowered murals and gilded balconies.

Like the operas that grace the Volksoper, the Wagner buildings are a celebration of art as fun. Forget Vienna's reputation for conservatism.

The pleasure of living is always close to the surface.

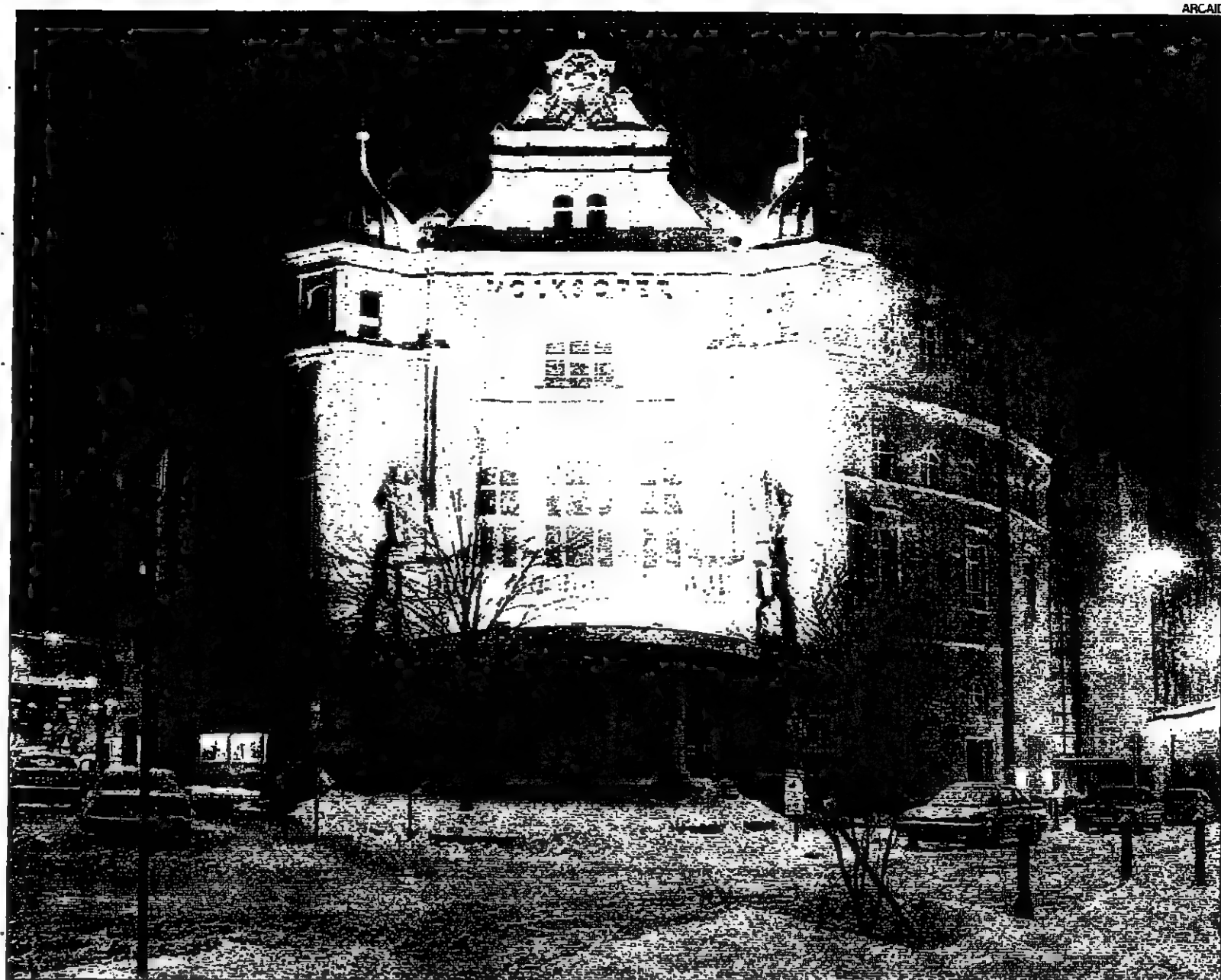
In the spirit of the Viennese, I spent four evenings and one afternoon at the Volksoper to enjoy Lehar (*The Merry Widow* and *Land of Smiles*), Kalman (*Countess Maritza*), Strauss (*A Night in Venice*) and Benatzky (*White Horse Inn*). This last was a late arrival on the operetta scene overlapping with the rise of the Broadway musical. For its London opening, in 1931, the Coliseum was transformed into a Tyrolean village with three orchestras and a cast of 160 not to mention horses, dogs and goats. They gave their all for a record-breaking 651 performances.

The producer, Oswald Stoll, demanded and got a water tank built above the stage to create a real dampener for the storm scene. The latest Volksoper production was more modest, but no worse for that. If *White Horse Inn* was a bit of a letdown it was because the director had updated the action, pitching it somewhere around the 1950s, which made nonsense of a storyline featuring the Emperor Franz Joseph as a pivotal character.

The Volksoper, which shares its performers with the Staatsoper where they put on the serious stuff, was more at home with Strauss, Lehar and Kalman, whose work was played in period and with enormous verve. Pace is vital to operetta. There must be no chance for the audience to reflect on the filminess of the plot, which invariably has hero and heroine falling in love, out of love and in love again.

An exception is *Land of Smiles*, written by Lehar (or, rather, adapted from an existing work) to meet the enduring Western fascination for the Orient. The heroine goes to China to marry her true love only to find that the Eastern tendency towards polygamy is too much for a well-bred Viennese girl. The sad ending is anticipated in the big number *You Are My Heart's Delight*.

We enter familiar operetta territory with *A Night in Venice* and *Countess Maritza* with their Viennese waltzes



The Volksoper: optimistically planned to be at the heart of the Austro-Hungarian empire

and vigorous dance routines. Then there is the *Merry Widow*, just the most famous of all operettas, performed at the Volksoper as nowhere else. The exuberance on stage carries over to the audience, who can hardly wait to clap along with the *Can Can*. What singers and dancers! They look good too. These are performers who fulfil the romantic ideal, not warbling heavyweights.

The Volksoper is some way from the centre of town, which in compact Vienna means no more than two or three tram stops from the big hotels. But it is curious that the theatre, a turn-of-the-century functional structure, should have been built away from the magnificent Staatsoper and other great cultural institutions on the Ringstrasse. Could it be

that the Viennese were a little embarrassed by their fondness for operetta, not quite bringing themselves to accept that they were enjoying true art? Not a bit of it. The Volksoper was opened when Vienna was the heart of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, a growing city that was straining to match imperial grandeur. The theatre was deliberately placed at a point where the city centre was forecast to be 20 years ahead. Such optimism proved ill-founded. The First World War brought the Hapsburg empire crashing down and with it any Viennese pretension to be the leading city of Europe.

Today, the Volksoper offers traditional and contemporary musical treats — from *Die Zauberflöte*, Mozart's forerunner for operetta, to *My Fair*

Lady and *Kiss Me Kate*. The connecting thread, says deputy director Robert Herzl, is that they are all "fairies tales for adults". The Viennese turn up in strength for their shot of musical escapism, returning again and again for their favourite shows. The clubby atmosphere — with attendants who smile and chat as they show you to your seat, extends to overseas visitors. The passion for operetta knows no linguistic boundaries.

The season runs from September to the last day of June. The operettas I saw remain in the repertoire with the exception of *White Horse Inn*, which came off in December. A new production, more faithful to the original, is promised for two years hence.

BARRY TURNER

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 25

QUELLIO

(a) A Spanish ruff. An adaptation of the Spanish *cuello* a neck or collar. Latin *collum* a neck. "Our rich muckadu doublet, with our cut cloth-of-gold sleeves, and our quellio."

ROTIFERA

(c) Tiny animals. A class of minute (usually microscopic) animalcules, having rotatory organs which are used in swimming. From the Latin for carrying wheels. "The Rotifers are minute mostly microscopic creatures which inhabit almost all our ponds and streams."

RAMILLIE

(b) Applied to a wig having a long plait behind tied with a bow at top and bottom. Also a method of cocking the hat. A toponym from *Ramillies* in Belgium, the scene of Marlborough's victory in 1706. Laurence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy* 1767: "Putting my uncle Toby's great ramillie wig into pipes."

PREGNADA

(a) A variety of lemon. From the Spanish *preñada* big with child. "There are [in Tenerife] oranges and lemons, especially the pregnadas, which have small ones in their bellies, from whence they are so denominated."

Expos come and go. By their nature they are a mixed blessing: Seville's (in 1992) bequeathed new roads, a bridge and a post-modern railway station to the city. These have left the old city, for all its charm, feeling like a theme park. Now Lisbon is gearing up for an Expo in 1998.

Lisbon is a fragile flower. The old city centre, architecturally rich, has suffered from decades of decay. Much of the classic tilework is scarred, facades have been defaced by jutting air-conditioners and ugly signs, and tenement washing hangs above and along great avenues. Worst of all, cars are parked nose-to-tail along the pavements, making walking hazardous in some areas.

The 50-year-old wooden streetcars get locked in furious combat on the corners of steep hills with taxis and selfish parkers. Yet Lisbon is, gloriously, a walker's city.

A good place to start is where the city meets the narrow neck of the River Tagus, at the Praca do Comercio, once considered one of the loveliest squares in Europe. Here you feel transported into Graham Greene's *Our Man in Havana* — I half expected to see shadowy uniformed figures peering out of dark windows. From the square, walk north through the lavish marble-flanked arch to the Rua Augusta, where the Portuguese stop frequently

Tarts make you linger longer

for a splash of coffee in small oases reminiscent of Europe in the 1950s. For the most intimate restaurants and bars, take a left to the Rua dos Sapateiros. Just before it meets another square, the Rossio. A great aperitif, available in any of the bars, is white port — dry, yet deliciously fruity. On a grander scale, try one of the old belle époque restaurants serving fresh fish any way you want it — baked, grilled, poached, boiled or fried.

The Rossio is the heart of Lisbon, a meeting place bustling with street vendors, lottery-ticket sellers, cafes, main Metro station, bus stops, the central taxi rank and bygone-era railway station. In the Middle Ages, the Rossio was used for bullfights, carnivals and rallies as well as the burning of heretics during the Inquisition. From the Rossio, stroll north in the shade of the trees of the wide Avenida da Liberdade and pause at the Tivoli kiosk, last colourful survivor of several that once adorned the Avenida. (The adjacent old Tivoli cinema is now, sadly, a conference centre.) The Avenida is liberally dotted with restaurants, where it is easy to spot the tourists because they are the only ones sitting down — the



High rise: the Santa Justa lift

Portuguese love to eat at the counter. It was the Portuguese who opened the sea route between Europe and India via the Cape of Good Hope, introducing tangy Indian spices to Portuguese cuisine. And they are still there. My one disappointment was that the once ubiquitous and delicious sardine is now considered a poor person's food.

The smartest shopping is to be had on the Rua Garrett, and to reach it the most adventurous way is to take the creaking, epic lift, the Elevador

Carmo, from the Rua do Carmo. In the Rua Garrett, take time out for coffee or afternoon tea and cake in the Café A Brasileira (The Brazilian Woman), once the haunt of artists and writers. Choose from a tempting array of fruit tarts, custard tarts, cream and chocolate cake. Linger awhile, as the Portuguese do.

Finally, walk back down to the Tagus waterfront via the Rua Serpa Pinto, a steep street devoted to antiques and antiquarian bookshops (including, since this was a great centre of navigation, wonderful antique map shops).

I spent a few days in one of the most comfortable, friendly and well-run hotels I have ever stayed in: Hotel da Lapa, high up in the Lapa district overlooking the harbour. Originally built in the 19th century as a private stately home, it has been tastefully restored as a hotel. In such tranquillity you can pamper yourself, breakfasting serenely in your room, or on the balcony while, below, the river hums with ferries and boats of all sizes. You can take a dip in the outdoor pool even in early November.

This peaceful resting place is, in

fact, in the middle of embassy territory, where ornately elegant buildings with their private subtropical gardens shelter diplomats, their families and staff from inquisitive eyes. These are beautiful buildings, some of which are still adorned with traditional blue, white and yellow tiles.

The imminent Expo is the last of the 20th century and is dedicated to preserving the oceans: 1998 is also the 500th anniversary of Vasco da Gama's discovery of the sea route to India. All this will fuel a transformation of the old docks. A huge site of some 60 hectares extending for five kilometres along the north bank of the river Tagus will modernise and change the face of Lisbon for ever. So catch it while you can.

MIMI IRVING

● The author flew to Lisbon on TAP Air Portugal (0171-630 0909). The standard fare is £82 return until June.

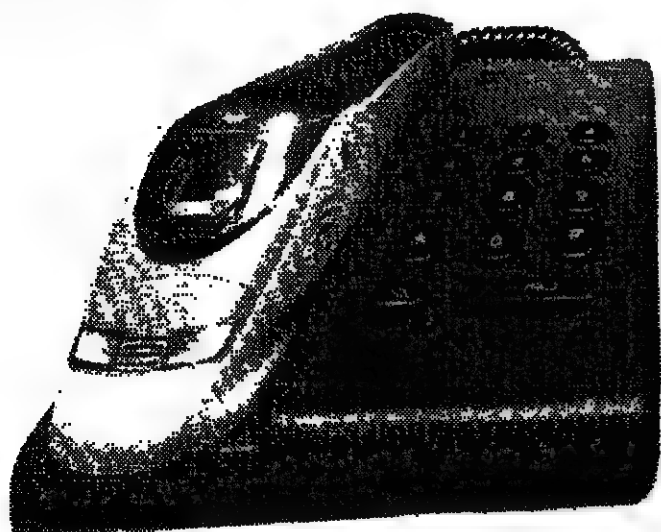
● She stayed at the Hotel da Lapa, 4 Rua Pau da Bandeira, Lisbon (00 351 395-0005, fax: 395-0665). Tariff: 40,000 escudos (£214 weekdays, special weekend rate of 38,000 escudos per day (£206) for a suite with balcony overlooking gardens and River Tagus. An excellent dinner including wine cost £62 for two.

● Less expensive hotels recommended by Birnbaum's Portugal, a reliable American guide, are the Tivoli, Avenida da Liberdade (00 351 356-1300) and the Carlton at 56 Avenida Conde Valbom (00 351 795-1157).

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CRUISING: Life on a liner plying the sun-kissed Caribbean islands is never short of temptation ...

Belly-flops, bingo and big dinners

The sheer scale of the *MS Seaward*, one of five ships in the Norwegian Cruise Line, surprised me. I had failed to follow the explosive development of the cruise industry, assuming that such holidays had remained exclusive in tone and excessive in price.

My previous experience had been limited to an upmarket cruise, with about 150 passengers, around the Greek islands many years back. This week in the Caribbean was to be very different.

It started with a flight of seven and a half hours from Gatwick to San Juan, capital of Puerto Rico. After a short transfer to the port and a good deal of form-filling, we were assigned our cabins (comfortable if slightly plastic), and what was to prove a memorable week began.

Only when emerging on to one of the upper four of the *Seaward's* ten decks did its vast size become apparent: 700ft long, with four and a half laps of the promenade deck equalling one mile. One of my few fears, that our fellow travellers would be predominantly elderly, was soon banished. There were about 1,350 of them (200 short of maxi-



mum capacity), mainly American, plus a crew of 630 from 35 nationalities.

The average age seemed to be around 35, with a good number of honeymooning or recently married couples and a generous sprinkling of youngish, single people, more female than male.

My encounters suggested that far more of those aboard were employed in trade than in the professions: I did not meet one lawyer.

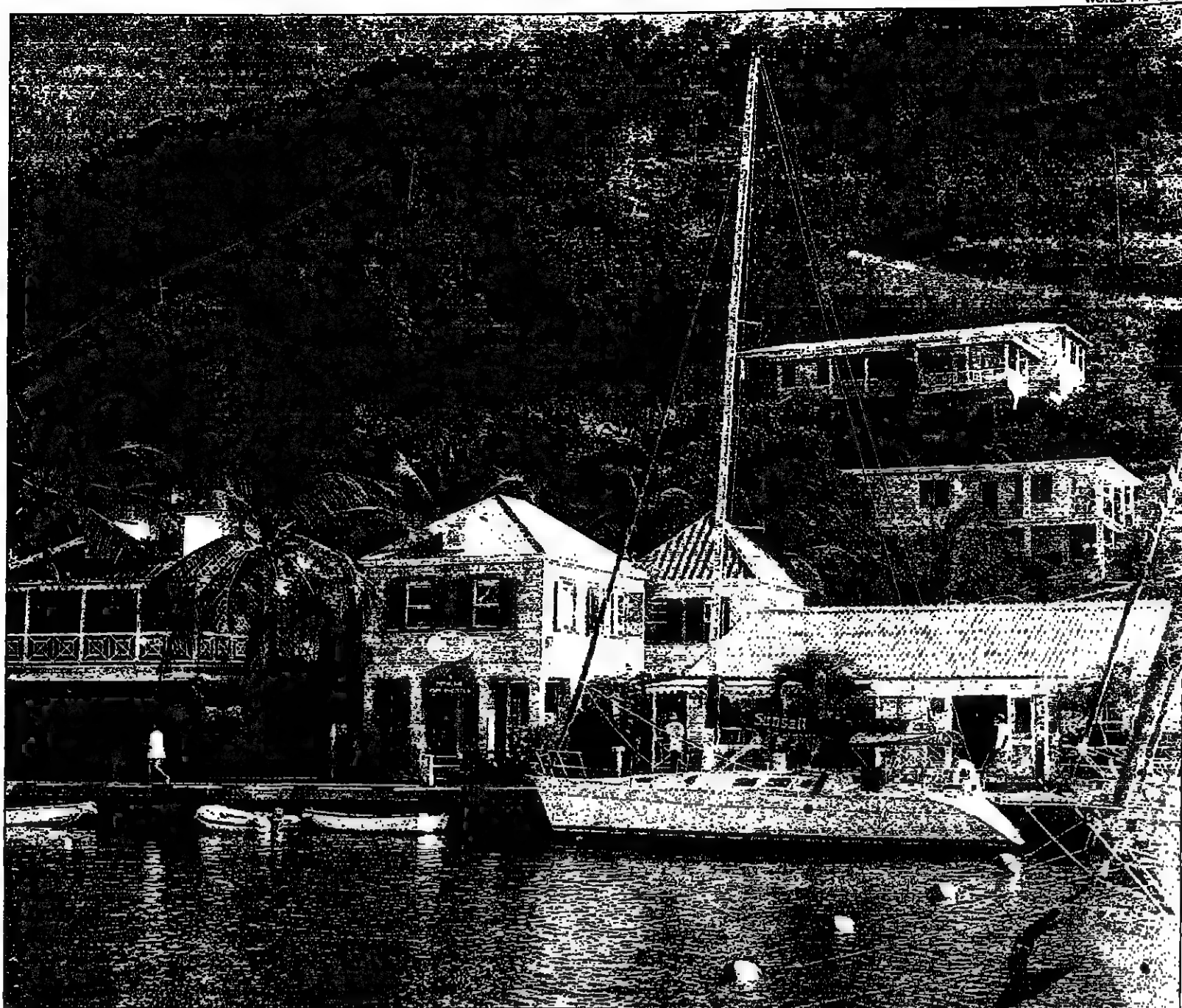
On the dot of 10pm, the ship got under way. By then the first test had been passed: dinner. Food bulks large on

cruises. On the *Seaward* it was delicious, with a choice of five or six main dishes — produced swiftly, and hot, to several hundred places at each sitting in the two main dining rooms. Two of seven evenings were designated as formal, though dinner jackets were worn only by a few.

A third, smaller and rather chic restaurant was understatedly called the Bistro. Breakfast and lunch were available in the main restaurants, but we generally took them in a self-service area on the swimming pool (ninth) deck, or from a pasta and salad display by the pool. In addition, quiche, sandwiches and cakes were available at teatime, there was an ice-cream stall and a midnight buffet by the two smallest pools, and room service was available 24 hours a day. All food was included in the price, a serious temptation to the greedy — of whom, to judge by the incidence of obesity and overloaded plates, there were more than a few. Drinks were extra and not cheap, especially the wine.

Life on board offered a gamut of experiences, from the inspiring to the naff. The greatest joy was to lean on the ship's rail caressed by a warm breeze, rum punch in hand, chatting to friends or new acquaintances as the setting sun transformed the vast sky into a Turneresque drama of pinks, dark blues and reds, followed by the rise of a moon that turned the water silver. By day, flying fish could be seen. At night, strange Caribbean seagulls fluttered and gibbered bat-like in the ship's lights.

At the more banal, man-



A typical small port in the Virgin Islands — colourful wooden houses and boats bobbing in the harbour against a backdrop of verdant hillsides

made end of the spectrum, there was a huge range of light entertainment, from gambling and dozens of fruit machines in the casino, through bingo, two dance groups, several musical shows, such as a shortened version of *Grease*, and a stand-up comedian.

The pool deck was the scene not just of serious morning aerobics but plenty of undemanding fun. Two sample intellect-sapping competitions in the pool, who could do the biggest and reddest belly-flop, and which of a male and female competitor could stuff ping-pong balls down their bikini/trunks.

The cruise consisted of two full days at sea, two in the Dutch Antilles, and two in the British and American Virgin Islands, for which various excursions were available.

The Dutch Islands of Aruba and Curaçao seemed an odd choice, because both are flat and scenically dull, unless you

happen to be excited by oil refineries, of which Oranjestad, Aruba's main port, had a fine example. But we found decent beaches on both: congenial shoppers enjoyed the duty-free shops, and Curaçao's port city, Willemstad, is pretty in mock-Dutch style.

The *Seaward's* alternative (or additional back-to-back) route offers what is arguably a stronger choice of islands, including Barbados and Martinique, but with only one full day at sea.

The Virgin Islands, common to both itineraries and badly battered by a hurricane soon after our visit, are not just hilly, green and scenic, but offer breathtaking views from their higher points of beach-lined bays and neighbouring islands and islets in a turquoise sea: not for nothing is this area a Mecca for small sailing boats.

The timetable offers excursions, at reasonable extra cost, and the chance of a few hours on a beach. There lies the main frustration of cruising: being at sea is an unalloyed pleasure, but stopovers offer a somewhat

tantalising glimpse of beaches and views that need to be savoured at greater length. That aside, my week on the *Seaward* was relaxing, restorative and entertaining. It was a wrench to disembark at San Juan, though a few hours topping up the tan by the pool at the Condado Plaza Hotel before our return flight helped to ease the pain.

ROGER BERTHOUD

Fact file

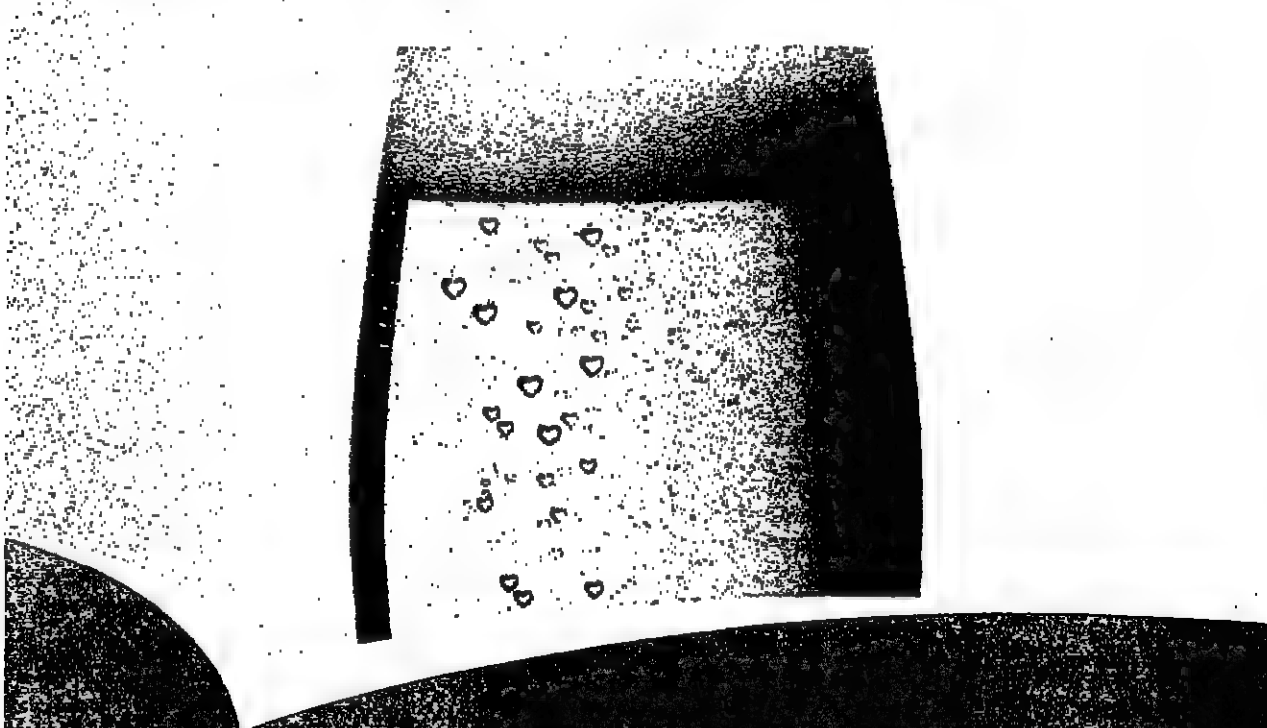
□ The author was a guest of Norwegian Cruise Line (0900 181560 and 0171-408 0046).
□ An eight-night inclusive package from Gatwick costs from £1,355 per person. The back-to-back 15-night option starts at £1,885. Prices include all meals on board, return flights, airport-ship transfers and a day room at the Condado Plaza Hotel in San Juan.

PICTURES



Still life awaiting an artist on the beach at Aruba

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... and, while the Indian Ocean islands have their disappointments, all is swell on a luxury voyage to Athens

What's another word for exotic?

Everything you read or hear about Zanzibar describes it as exotic but, as far as I could see, the most exotic thing about the island was its name. Admittedly, ports in any country are not the best vantage point, but we moved from the crowded, dirty docks into crowded, dirty streets lined with the peeling facades of neglected buildings. The malodorous market was filled with people who made no effort to hide their hostility.

Our official guide took us to a church, a spice shop and a slave market on the grounds that it was too small to accommodate our party. We sneaked back later and it turned out to be the most memorable part of the trip. There were two rooms, one for women and children and the other for men, but the low ceilings made it impossible to stand upright. It felt cramped with four of us in there, yet these rooms once held 200 people for up to two days while they waited to be sold and shipped abroad. By the mid-19th century the island had an annual turnover of 50,000 slaves.

The beaches of the east coast are reputedly beautiful but, because we had no time to see them, it was a relief to scuttle back for a large gin and tonic on the *MS Royal Star*, which had brought us to Zanzibar during a week-long cruise in the Indian Ocean.

Our trip had begun at Mombasa, Kenya, with three days at the Flamingo Beach Hotel. The elegant lobby looked promising after a long flight but the rooms were a disappointment, with rock-hard beds, no mini-bar and no soap.

The grounds, however, were beautiful, with glorious shrubs and massive waterfalls into the swimming pool. A family of monkeys came down from the trees to share the fruit which decorated my tropical cocktail. After that I carried a huge bag of peanuts at all times and they appeared at my French doors twice a day holding out



visitors are advised to remove jewellery and watches before any outing. We stayed put. If you want a break from hotel fare, however, I can recommend Claudio's Italian restaurant, a £5 taxi drive away.

On the fourth day it was down to the port and all aboard. The crew — Filipino, German and Greek — were charming, and the captain, who I expected to look like the man on the Players cigarette packet, turned out to be young and dashing.

Cruise people are a jolly bunch — well-travelled, affluent and hedonistic. Most seemed to have bulging wallets and svelte waistlines but, as I have a bulging waistline and a svelte wallet, it was a shock to discover that I had put on 6lb and my bar bill for the week was £120.

The fourth day brought us to Mayotte in the Comoros, a pretty, if dull island. The young girls' faces were painted in beautiful designs in white paste — proof that they did not have to work in the fields. The island has spectacular views but little else to recommend it.

Our next port of call, Nosy Be (pronounced Bay), one of the islands of Madagascar, was much better. The people in the capital, Hell Ville, seemed pleased to see us and there were lovely souvenirs to buy, embroidered linen and superb macramé boxes. The island's biggest export is ylang-ylang, a plant which is used as a basis for perfume.

Our last stop was the best. Shungu Mbuli was an island entirely without people, except us. Passengers lurked under parasols or snorkelled while the ship's crew set up a barbecue beneath the trees.

The problem with the Indian Ocean is that it sounds more exotic than it is. The islands we saw were so similar that they merged into an image of endless palm trees and markets. The *Royal Star*, however, has much to recommend it. Next time, I shall refuse to get off.

Island cruise fact file

- The author was a guest of Voyages Jules Verne, 21, Dorset Square, London NW1 6QG (0171-616 1000, fax 0171-723 8629).
- A 16-day trip to Mombasa, Kenya, with seven nights aboard the *MS Royal Star* and seven nights' full-board accommodation at the Flamingo Beach Hotel, costs from £1,650 per person, including flights. A supplement of £195 is payable for an upper-deck cabin. There are four departures a year from Gatwick.

MARY GOLD

Sailing in a sea of bubbly

A gleaming, polished deck glistening under the hot Mediterranean sun. As I sink back into a blue-and-white wooden deck recliner, a waiter appears: "A glass of champagne, sir? Will you take it here or shall I bring it to you in the pool?"

We are aboard the *Royal Viking Sun*, one of the world's most luxurious cruise liners, on a voyage from Barcelona to Athens. My fellow passengers are mostly American, average age 72, according to Robert, our young English waiter, who is working his passage to Sydney. Cruising is a way of life for most of these people and the only way to see the world. It is Florence, Rome and Pompeii this week, and next week a brisk tour of thousand years of ancient Greek and Turkish civilisation in three days.

Not that cruising is exclusively a pastime for the retired. Cunard, which owns the *Royal Viking Sun*, is keen to attract a new, younger market. It also believes that there is a growing British market to be tapped and hates the idea that cruising is almost an exclusively American activity. And, yes, there were Britons on board: my dinner table included a *Relate* (marriage guide), a *Counsellor* and a *Churchman* from Oxfordshire. None of us seemed to mind that everything on board is priced in dollars and the menu offers such un-British delights as "buckwheat blinis".

Every need is catered for, and such is the service that some people do not even bother to go ashore at ports of call. The food (included in the price) is superb, the wine list (not included) is extensive; bars are open day and night; a mini-Vegas of a casino mops up all your loose change; a cinema shows the latest films; and nightly live entertainment is based on the American tradition (a performer only has to launch into *Somewhere Over the Rainbow* and there is scarcely a dry eye on board).

There are about 450 crew to 600 passengers, and the Norwegian captain, Ola Harsheim, is a heroic figure to both. Many passengers — and about 70 per cent are "repeat business" — will ask whether Captain Harsheim is sailing before they book.

On the first day at sea, he hosts a show in the ship's theatre at which he introduces his senior officers and tells a little story about each as they run on to the stage from the wings to a big-band accompaniment, like participants in a television game show.

The captain throws regular cocktail parties in his quarters at which guests are treated to his own brand of Norwegian humour. This consists largely of Irish-type jokes with Swedes as the butt. "How do you spot a Swede in a crowd of Norwegians? He is the only one who looks up when someone shouts 'there's a dead bird'."

The ship is lavishly decorated, the recent refit having given the decor a 1970s feel, though some might hanker after the more traditional brass and mahogany.

The shore excursions are organised with military precision. Present yourself on the quayside at 9am and you will be escorted around the Colosseum, the Acropolis, the *Uffizi* or Ephesus.

The state cabins are sumptuous. I counted enough leather seating for 13 in mine. It is often hard to remember that one is on board a ship at all. The entire creation resembles nothing so much as a floating



Though everything you need is on board the liner, a shore excursion could take you to Florence with its wealth of art

Savoy hotel, except that the view out of the window is different every morning. "Is that the Bay of Naples? I don't remember that being there last night."

If something of the spirit of adventure is lacking, it is more than made up for by the pleasures of being pampered. It is sheer hedonistic pleasure with no hassle, no pressures, no stress.

On the last night on board, Jacqueline and Barbara, two widows from Houston, Texas, asked where I was planning to go on my next trip. I told them I had long had a dream to climb Mount Kilimanjaro. "What do you want to do that for?" they asked, genuinely bewildered. "Couldn't you get a helicopter or something to drop you on the top?" That is the true cruising ethos.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

Fact file

- The author was a guest of Cunard on *Royal Viking Sun* on a cruise from Barcelona to Athens. This year, the ship will cruise from Genoa to Venice, from October 12-26.
- Prices on the "Treasures of the Ancients" cruise start from £3,195 and include 14 nights' accommodation, with all meals and entertainment on board, return flights to London and transfers between airport and dock. Port and handling charges, UK Government tax, personal drinks and tipping are not included.
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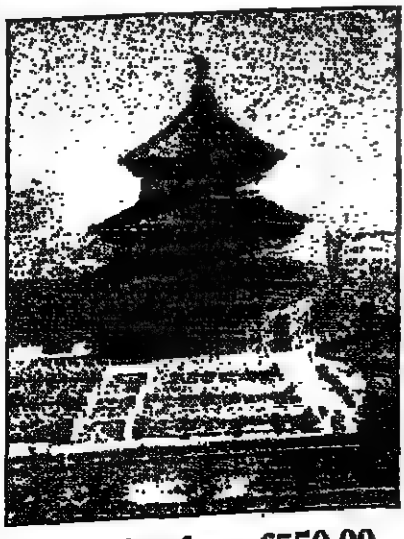
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NAMIBIA: Chasing Mad Max and the unicorn is no fantasy on the dry plains of Damaraland

Undisputed kings of the wild frontier

Admittedly it had two horns, but it was still the nearest thing to a unicorn I have ever seen. Catch it in profile and the long, slender horns look like one; startle it and it doesn't scamper but canters, with a long moment of suspension between strides; frighten it properly and it drops its withers and gallops.

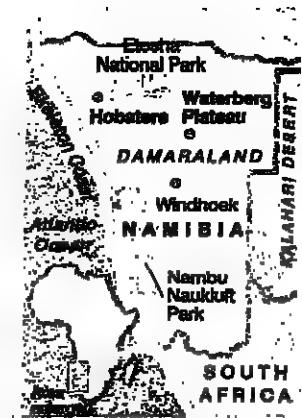
Oryx: with a Lone Ranger mask, black stockings with white socks on top and a tail like Cher's hairpiece. Oryx: the beast of the desert. Or, if you wish to be pedantic, the semi-desert. But anyway, at home in these gravel plains, these endless seas of cat-litter.

Is this the world's most handsome antelope? Or even quadruped? You can admire its dry-country adaptations: how it can raise its body temperature, dig for tubers, find hidden desert pools, concentrate its urine and even construct hollows and shelters to avoid the midday heat.

Or you can just admire its looks, its sheer presence: monarch of all the cat-litter it surveys. It exudes a sense of fastidious toughness. It was a new animal for me and a new chunk of Africa. I was in Namibia: a dry area called Damaraland, the Kalahari to my right, the Skeleton Coast to my left.

I don't know much about deserts: my natural habitat in Africa is savannah, where your head rings with bird-calls and there are more big mammals than you can seriously believe in. If you are a gourmand for wildlife, then savannah is your place.

The desert is more like nouvelle cuisine. You don't get much, and what you do get takes an awful lot of trouble, so you have to work extra hard to make sure that you appreciate every mouthful, or eyeful.



ate every mouthful, or eyeful. Every oryx is a gem: not for that reason, it is called gemsbok in Afrikaans.

Every springbok is a jewel too. In some places you see them by the thousand: in Damaraland you see one at a time: beautiful, delicate creatures, there to savour. It is an event when you see two or three together.

In this strange and wild place — it is not even a national park but communal land — you are never quite sure what will turn up. There are elephants and lions in the desert.

Oddly enough, this land of gravel and strange sharp hills, each one with the top sliced neatly off, is also a stronghold of black rhino. It used to be a fringe habitat for the species, but rhino have been so heavily poached in their main areas that the desert now holds significant numbers. What was once fringe is now heartland.

These desert rhino are not beasts who can subsist on the bare open plains but Damaraland is slashed with green gullies: green gashes

Fact file

The author travelled to Namibia as a guest of Save the Rhino Safaris (0171-409 7982), which acts as a fund-raiser for the organisation Save the Rhino International and the Namibia Black Rhino Fund. He flew with Air Namibia. He travelled in Namibia with Mike Hearn of Save the Rhino Trust, who will be guiding a number of tours with Desert Adventure Safaris.

□ The itinerary includes time at Hnab Lodge, a delightful and restful place on the edge of Damaraland. There is also excellent game viewing to be had at Hobatere.

□ A three-day extension is available at the stunning Waterberg Plateau. The price for a 17-day safari is £2,535.

Beauty and the beast: the oryx is a sight to behold with its black mask and white socks

across the brown and desiccated land. These are known delightfully as ephemeral rivers — now you see them, now you don't. Mostly you don't. It doesn't rain much in Damaraland: say six inches to a foot a year. But it rains

farther inland and, after a distant storm, the water will sometimes crash through these gullies leaving a trail of fertility in its wake. One man I met spoke with awe about his local river, which a short time ago had reached the sea — for

the first time in 27 years. I walked downstream with him: not walking on water, for it had all gone. Only a puddle or two remained.

In the heart of the desert, then, you find a series of green tunnels. If you wish, you can creep through them. I have often walked through the 8-inch grass of the savannah and I know the correct name for it: adrenalin grass. You can stumble on top of anything: a herd of buffalo, a pride of lion.

In these tunnels there is always a pleasant farmyard smell: rhino dung. They deposit it in communal heaps, middens, to let each other know who is about. The scent of the midden: the winding tunnel with its blind corners; the surge of adrenalin.

I found furious scrapings where male rhinos had advertised their presence as territorial bosses. Often I saw their tracks: three-toed monsters. At one point, there was 30 yards of trampling. Here, in a frenzy of territoriality, a male had dragged his back legs across the landscape.

I was travelling with Mike Hearn, who works in rhino conservation in Namibia. He knows that there are 120 rhinos in Damaraland; he knows each one by name. There is a one-eared beast called van Gogh, but Hearn has an affinity with Mad Max.

The rhinos are comparatively safe here. People are few and there are no strangers. If there were, they would be spotted at once. And the people have a vested interest in rhinos — many work as trackers for conservation. The rhinos are few, widely scattered and hard to find. These may be problems for the rhinos, but they have become conservation advantages.

It is a rich and rewarding place, this semi-desert. To sleep out beneath its starry ceiling is no small matter. And Namibia holds other riches, of a kind found elsewhere in Africa, where there is more water about the place.

And that is a joy, as lions and zebras must be, but it was

the desert that stuck in the mind because it was new to me: because it was peculiar; because of the understated pleasures of agoraphobia.

I didn't actually see rhino, the trip was too short and fleeting. On a longer trip, you are unlikely to miss out. But I never mind not seeing wildlife. It is enough to know that there are 120 rhinos about somewhere — maybe round the next corner. If not rhino, then an oryx or a unicorn. It's all one to me.

SIMON BARNES

AFRICA TIPS

□ Explore Worldwide (01252 344161) offers a 16-day Kenyan safari, which includes a visit to the Masai Mara Game Reserve. It departs on June 30 and costs £1,395 per person, including return flights from Heathrow, hotel and camping accommodation, most meals and tour guides.

□ Walking tours in Morocco are offered by Headwater Holidays (01606 48699). A ten-night trip explores the kasbahs of Ouarzazate and the hills and souks of Marrakech. Departing on March 16, it costs from £727 per person, including return flights from Heathrow and some meals.

□ Encounter (0171-370 6951) offers a 15-day expedition through the Ethiopian highlands, taking in the ancient site of Axum, the Simien National Park and the cave churches of Lalibela. The price, £595 per person, includes all transport, accommodation (mostly camping), food and entrance fees. Flights not included. Departs November 23 and December 7.

□ Guerba Expeditions (01373 826611) has a 25-day Namibian expedition by 4x4 into the remote Kaokoland Wilderness. Highlights include trips to the ancient Himba tribe, Skeleton Coast and Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe. The cost, £1,660 per person, includes return flights from Heathrow. Food kitty of £170 required.

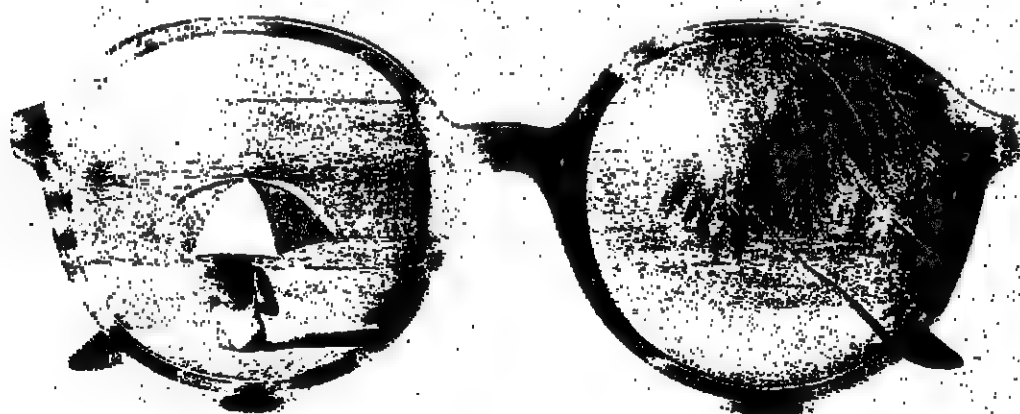
□ The Imaginative Traveller (0181-742 8612) offers an eight-day Kenyan safari through Samburu, Buffalo Springs, the Loldiga Hills and Lake Nakuru. At £920 per person (based on two sharing), it includes two nights' lodge accommodation, camping, all meals on safari, entrance fees, transport and guides. Flights not included. Tours depart every Saturday.

□ The Art of Travel (0171-738 2038) has safaris from an elephant camp in Zimbabwe, taking in Jijima, Deteema and Imbela. The cost, £1,988 per person, includes return flights from Gatwick, accommodation, all meals and drinks, park fees and guides. Departs April 11, April 20 and June 8.

□ Africa by Road by Bob Swain and Paula Snyder is a guide book recently published by Bradt Publications (01494 873478) at £12.95. Written for travellers wishing to explore the continent in their own vehicle, the guide provides details on driving techniques, equipment and information on countries.

PERRY CLEVELAND-PECK

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SWANSEA

EGYPT: Exploring the new pleasures of the Sinai peninsula and enjoying the splendours around Cairo



Tourism and the traditional way of life come together in the southern Sinai, which is being promoted as Egypt's next great visitor attraction

Beaches and Beduin

The Sinai peninsula, with the Red Sea on either side and some of the most important biblical sites in between, is being promoted as Egypt's next great tourist attraction.

Twenty years ago, Sinai was almost inaccessible to the outside world. A scattering of army barracks, the temporary tent villages of Beduin tribes and a few tarmac roads were about the only human marks left since the Red Sea closed in on the Pharaoh's pursuing army 3,000 years ago.

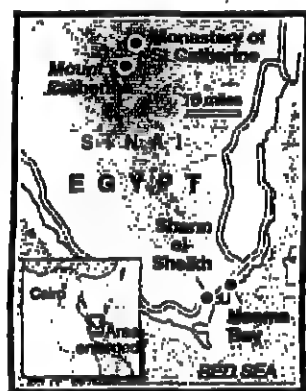
Tourism has taken off only in the past five years, but progress has been fast. Where Lawrence of Arabia once gathered his Beduin forces for raids against the Turks there are now huge "wedding cake" hotels rising from the sand.

Tourism is concentrated in the southern apex of the triangular peninsula, where a string of resorts have sprung out of the desert near the international airport at Sharm el Sheikh. A handful of British holiday companies are already

offering winter-sun and learn-to-dive packages, but it is the Italians who dominate. Egyptian waiters in the bars and restaurants of Sharm el Sheikh greet tourists with "ciao" rather than "hello", and the guides often speak better Italian than English. The effect is refreshing. Too many accessible winter sun spots have been discovered and, in some cases, already ruined by the British holiday industry.

The development of the coast continues apace, although the seemingly inexhaustible volume of land means that visitors are not bothered by building-site noises, as on the more crowded Mediterranean coasts.

Most of the development has been of tasteful and upmarket hotels. All the leading international chains are represented here, and there are two Hilton hotels at Sharm el Sheikh. Even so, prices are far from prohibitive. When the bottom fell out of the Egyptian tourism industry in 1993, following a spate of terrorist



attacks, Sinai became one of the holiday bargains of the world.

The great attraction is the diving, rated among the world's best. The Egyptian authorities know they have a world-class asset on their hands and protect it jealously. Breaking off or even touching the coral is forbidden and the number of visitors to the RAS Muhammad National Marine Park is controlled.

There are dozens of diving schools based in the resorts of

Sharm el Sheikh and Naama Bay, offering courses for beginners upwards. Exotic species of fish, from huge mantas rays to the beautiful but deadly poisonous lionfish, live in and around the coral reefs. Away from the hotel beaches the water is as clear as glass and even the humble snorkeller can feel like Jacques Cousteau floating above the multicoloured coral walls that line the Sinai coast.

The southern Sinai has much to offer visitors who do not feel the urge to slip on their flippers. As a simple winter getaway it scores well. The resort beaches are rocky rather than sandy, despite the surrounding desert, but a lunar backdrop of barren mountain ranges and brick-red cliffs make this a wildy spectacular place to flop in the sun. An hour's drive away by Jeep, well beyond the reach of most tourists, there are glorious white sands that would make a developer weep.

The resorts offer little in the way of culture or history. They

are creations of the last decade and most of the people working there are recent arrivals from Cairo. Within an easy day trip, however, are some of the most important religious sites, notably St Catherine's Monastery, where 15 Greek Orthodox monks scratch out a living at the site of the "burning bush". Nearby Mount Sinai is even more famous, though the spiritual atmosphere is now often marred by the hordes of less than reverent tourists.

An alternative trip from the coast is a camel ride into the desert to meet the increasingly tourist-dependent Beduin. There are about 70,000 of these nomads living in 25 tribes in the Sinai and, despite Government attempts to re-house them, they have refused to give up their desert domain. The evening meal in a Beduin tent, watching the sun setting behind the shark-tooth mountains of the Sinai, is not to be missed.

JONATHAN PRYNN

Temples and tombs of the grand tour

Shuffling out on to the already warming balcony of my hotel room in Cairo, I was presented with compelling evidence that I was indeed staying at one of the grandest hotels in the world. Soaring above the palm trees and the swimming pool in the tropical gardens was the pyramid of Chephren, honey-coloured in the morning sun.

I had arrived at the Oberoi Mena Gardens Hotel at Giza at the start of a seven-day trip to Egypt which was designed to show off three of the country's most beautiful hotels as much as the treasures of antiquity.

The 14-day Grand Hotels of Egypt tour had been compressed into seven days for our party, giving a first-time visitor to Egypt, like myself, a feeling of sensory overload as we transferred from one magnificent site to another via the glittering elegance of our five-star accommodation.

We had the benefit of a tour manager, Joanna Bales, the company's operations manager, who ushered us from one stop to another via temples and tombs at least 4,000 years old. We also had an Egyptian guide, Mohammed Gamal, a 28-year-old university graduate in tourism, who helped to bring the carvings and paintings alive for us with stories of ancient Egypt.

It was at the Mena Garden hotel in 1943 that Churchill and President Roosevelt met to discuss how to end the Second World War. For a supplement of £90 per person per night you can stay where they were billeted, in the old palace section of the hotel with its gigantic chandelier and arabic wood panels. We had to make do with breakfast on Churchill's balcony.

The stay in Cairo took in a visit to the pyramids, which



culminated in a slightly unnerving crawl along a tunnel into the heart of the second-largest pyramid at Giza, the Pyramid of Khafre. The battered Sphinx was in mid restoration.

The highlight of Cairo was the Egyptian Museum in the centre of the city. This gorgeous, shambolic treasure house really demands days, if not weeks, of study. Exhibits are crammed into its galleries, corridors and halls so that you almost stumble by accident with its jewels and vast gilded wooden tomb furniture. The exquisite gold funerary mask is in a side room, in a nondescript glass case.

On to Aswan and the Old Cataract Hotel with its views over the Nile and its islands. Built in 1899, it boasts an historic guest list which includes Agatha Christie, Sir Winston Churchill and Czar Nicholas II. For a guaranteed view of the Nile you need to pay a supplement of £10 per

night per person. It's worth it. The balcony view offers a biblical scene, with the white sails of the traditional feluccas. On a hill opposite sits the squat form of the Aga Khan's mausoleum. The Old Cataract has a rather unprepossessing modern sister, the New Cataract, which resembles a multistorey car park.

From the Old Cataract, which many would recognise from its backdrop appearance in the film of the Agatha Christie story *Death on the Nile*, we were treated to a river trip on a felucca, a flight to visit Abu Simbel — the vast temple rescued and relocated to escape the rising waters created by the High Dam — and the beautiful Temple at Philae, another site moved from the path of the waters.

The final hotel on the trip was the Old Winter Palace at Luxor, another short flight up the Nile. Built as an hotel by Thomas Cook at the end of the last century, and set in tropical gardens on the banks of the great river, it was later used by King Farouk as his winter resort home.

From the front steps of the palace you can catch a ferry to the west bank and take a bus ride to the Valley of the Kings.

Despite the daytime heat — it was about 45C — one of the advantages of visiting Egypt during the unpopular summer season is that the crowds of tourists at the magnificent tombs are thinner. You have more time to study the paintings and carvings and wonder at it all.

The temple complex at Karnak is probably too large even to get crowded. It is simply a place to stroll around, listen to your guide and marvel.

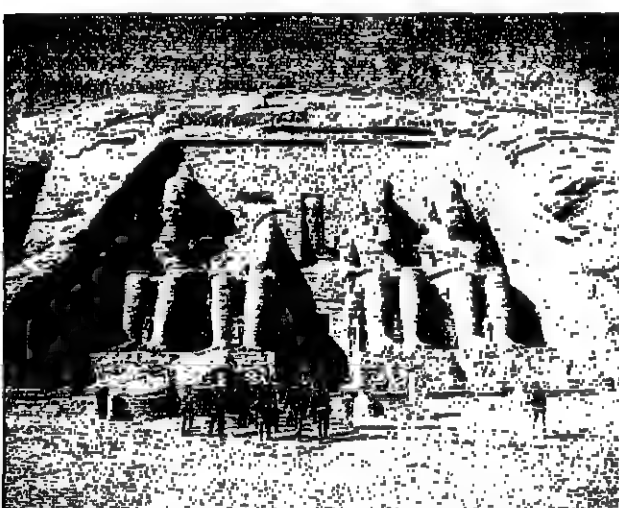
JOHN WELLMAN

Fact file

□ The author was a guest of Bales Tours (01306 885991), Oberoi Hotels at the Mena Gardens at Giza, Hotel Sofitel at the Old Cataract Hotel, Aswan and the Old Winter Palace Hotel at Luxor, and of EgyptAir (0171-880 4239).

□ The Bales Grand Hotels of Egypt tour costs from £795 per person in the off-season in June (single supplement £275) rising to £1,245 for December 17 to 31 1996 (single supplement £399). Price includes B&B and return flights from London.

□ Tour guides for the sites mentioned could be organised at a total price of about £216, including English-speaking guide, driver and car and entrance fees, but not tips.



The relocated temple of Ramses II (1250 BC) at Abu Simbel

How to get there and where to stay

□ The author was a guest of Destination Red Sea (0181-440 9900). Seven-night B&B holidays at a four-star hotel in Sharm el Sheikh start from about £389 per person based on two people sharing a room, and includes return flights from Gatwick.

□ Five-day diving courses cost £175 per person, including weights, tanks and air. Seven nights in a unisex dormitory at the Red Sea College, including the diving course, costs from £439.

□ An evening camel ride into the desert to have a meal with a Beduin tribe costs about £20 a head. Two-day excursions to Mount Sinai and St Catherine's Monastery cost about £50 a head. Longer excursions are available to Cairo, Aqaba and Petra.

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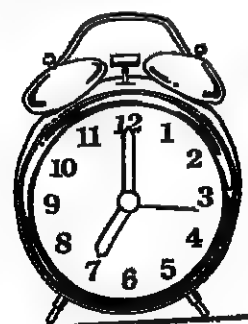
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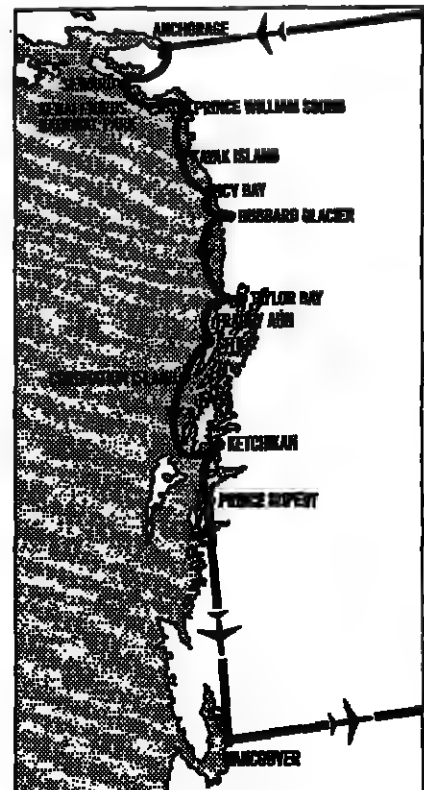
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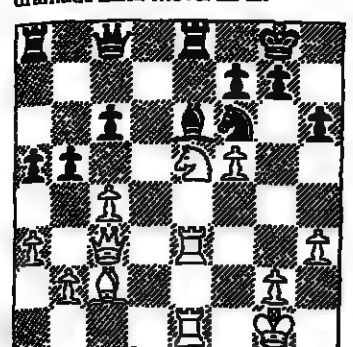
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3

CHESS

by Raymond Keene

ONE of the most fascinating games from Kasparov's recent victory against the Deep Blue computer was game four. The standard method against computers is to keep the position closed and strategic, and if possible suppress any tactics. Here Kasparov's inclination to attack got the better of him. Deep Blue sidestepped a number of poisonous traps, and ultimately it was Kasparov who had to fight to save the draw.



A fascinating decision. My inclination would have been a quiet move such as 22 Kf2, leaving Black with the onus of finding a continuation. 22... Bxf2? Curiously, Deep Blue had "crashed" before this move and a 20-minute interval ensued before it could be restarted. Before the crash, Kasparov had been expecting Deep Blue to accept the pawn sacrifice by 22... Bxf2, when he claimed that that was beyond the computer's analytical horizon. Did the crash divert Deep Blue from what might have been its original intention?

Let us look at what could occur after the expected move 22... Bxf2. Now White has to force the pace with the sacrifice 23 Nxf7, after which Black has three possibilities: (a) 23... Bxc2 and now 24 Nd6+! gxf6 25 Qxc2 is unexpectedly strong for White, who threatens Qg6+ (e.g. 25... Kg7 (not 25... Rxc3 26 Qg6+ and Qxf6) 26 Rxc3 Nxf7 Bxf2 27... Kf6 (27... Kf8 28 Qh7 is immediately decisive) 28 Qh7 and the exposed black king will

soon succumb to the white attack. It is very difficult to see a defence for Black after 25 Qxc2.

(b) 23... Kxf7 is poor on account of 24 Rxf6 Nxf6 25 Bxf5 and White regains material equality (25... Qxf5 26 Rf1) while maintaining a powerful initiative.

(c) 23... Rxc3 is the best move, with a possible continuation of 24 Nxf6 gxf6 25 Rxc3 Bxc2 (25... Nf5 is possible, then White can consider 26 Rf5 Bxc2 27 Rxf5, with a strong initiative) 26 Qxf6 Qf8 27 Qxc6 with two pawns and a continuing initiative for the piece.

Superficially Black has a great advantage. White's knight on d5 is not entirely stable and he has three pawn islands to White's two. All is far from finished, though, and over the next few moves Deep Blue shows that this is entirely its kind of position.

An unpleasant shock for Kasparov. Suddenly White's king is exposed to threats on its own back rank. 35 Rxc4 Nf4. Deep Blue reroutes its knight, using the obvious threat of... Rd1+ along the way. 36 Bf3 Nd3. Black has given up a pawn, but this is purely temporary. Its knight has attained a dominating position and White's queenside pawns are ripe for the harvest. White is now clearly on the defensive.

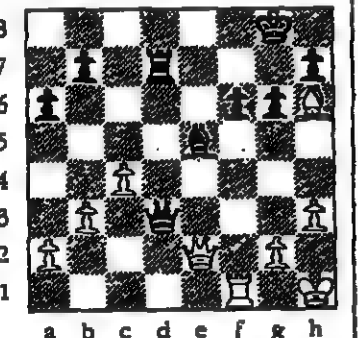
37 Qd4 Qd2 38 Qg3 Qxc3 39 Qd4 Kf7 40 Rf7 Qf7 41 Rf5 Qf7

This sacrifice is the neatest way of ensuring a draw.

42 Rf8! 43 Qd5 44 Qf4 Qf6 45 Bf5 Rf8 46 Bg6 Qf7 47 Qc7 Qd4 48 Kf2 Rf8 49 Bf5 Qf6 50 Bg6 Rf8

Draw agreed.

Fortunately for Kasparov, he can still oscillate his bishop between h5 and g6, so Black can do nothing.



Last week's winners: B Conway, Radcliffe, Manchester; J Wood, Riverside, Cardiff; J Lysaght, Corby, Northants.



No 719

ACROSS
1 Morning twittering (4,6)
7 Weapon store (7)
8 Pulse rate (5)
10 Programme involving listeners (5,2)
11 Similar (5)
12 Abate (6)
15 Adorn, festoon (6)
17 Incites: they are won by the brave (5)
18 Drowned girl (Hamlet) (7)
21 Male duck (5)
22 Marsh gas (7)
23 Caudron (for mixing people, ideas) (7,3)

DOWN
1 Dance (club) with pop music (5)
2 Screw up face in pain (5)
3 Group of settlers (6)
4 Furious anger (7)
5 Country, capital Kiev (7)
6 Reduced to beggary (10)
9 Mole built out into sea (10)
13 Holy war (7)
14 Cut up (eg lab specimen) (7)
16 Piece of land; ordinary (6)
19 Get warm, exciting (slang) (3,2)
20 Smallest amount (5)

SOLUTION TO NO 718
ACROSS: 1 Dilatory 5 Lich 9 Fringe benefit 10 Zeno
11 Noblest 13 Excite 15 In half 18 Masseuse 20 Cock
23 Mouth-watering 24 Noel 25 Sensibly
DOWN: 1 Doff 2 Loire 3 Tugboat 4 Rubens 6 Tuffetti 7 Hot
8 Knob 12 Helmsman 14 Costume 16 Nucleus 17 Arcane
19 Echo 21 Climb 22 Ugly

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Police given health warning on new CS gas canister

By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

POLICE in England and Wales went on patrol yesterday armed with CS gas sprays in spite of warnings about possible health risks.

More than 2,000 officers have been issued with the canisters. The gas can incapacitate an assailant within seconds, but the 16 forces taking part in the six-month trial have been warned that it may also cause facial and eye injuries which could lead to damages claims.

The solvent used as a propellant in the French-made canisters can cause secondary effects of skin reddening, scaling and blistering, according to a report by the Association of Chief Police Officers. It added that less research had been carried out on the solvent used as a propellant in the canisters than the association had been given to understand.

Three police officers involved in testing the gas are seeking damages for injuries.

The association's report, circulated to chief constables, said there were two options: await the development of a new product with a safe solvent, which could take months, or go ahead with the trials "in the knowledge of the possible health risks that have been identified".

It added: "Chief constables may not feel that they are prepared to wait this long for a less than lethal option to protect officers."

The gas will be carried by 1,000 Met officers based at Streatham, Charing Cross, Forest Gate, Ealing, and South Norwood, and officers in Avon and Somerset, Cambridgeshire, Cleveland, Dorset, Durham, Dyfed-Powys, Greater Manchester, Kent, Leicestershire, Merseyside, Northumbria, North Yorkshire, West Mercia, West Midlands and West Yorkshire.

The five-inch-long canisters, already used by police in Belgium and France, are carried in a belt pouch. They contain CS in powder form which can be propelled up to three metres by a solvent, MIBK, aimed at the attacker's face. Officers will be asked to complete questionnaires after using the spray.

A Metropolitan Police inspector is one of three officers seeking compensation for skin blistering suffered after exposure to CS during testing by Northamptonshire Police. The force would not disclose the sum being sought.

Jan Walker, a solicitor representing the three officers, said: "They suffered most unpleasant burns and in one

case the spray was put directly into his eyes and that is what caused the burning to the eyeballs.

"If this sort of thing is going to happen to members of the public, it is very worrying."

Ministers have been under pressure to provide the police with additional protection. Paul Kernaghan, assistant chief constable of North Yorkshire, which is testing the sprays, said: "I would accept there may possibly be an adverse health reaction. However, I would not consider this to be severe on the basis of the advice available to me."

"These sprays have been subject to rigorous testing by independent scientific and medical advisers. We have been told by the Home Office and the Department of Health that the product we are trialling is the best available, so we are operating on the basis of their professional advice."



Police with one of the arrested men. They threw him to the ground and bound his hands with plastic cord

Officers open fire on hijacked security van

ARMED police ambushed a hijacked security van yesterday, firing shots and arresting several people.

The police officers, wearing bullet-proof vests and carrying machine pistols, stopped the van near a disused warehouse in Fulham, southwest London. Three police vans, several police cars and an ambulance converged on the scene.

Police said several arrests were made. One man was thrown to the ground as he was arrested in the road. Officers from the Flying Squad tied his hands behind his back with plastic cord and held him to the ground. No one was injured.

The incident centred on an empty alleyway 50 metres from a large Sainsbury's supermarket at about 8.45am, near the Chelsea Harbour Club gym often used by the Princess of Wales. She did not attend the gym yesterday.

Scotland Yard said: "Officers investigating a security van hijack stopped a vehicle in Townsend Road. A number of people are in custody and inquiries continue."



PC Caroline Corrie carrying the CS spray

Jailed sergeant is cleared by judge

By RICHARD DUCE

POLICE sergeant who had a heart attack after he was jailed for assaulting a 13-year-old boy had his conviction quashed on appeal yesterday.

Sergeant Rod Adams, who spent 24 hours in solitary confinement at Brixton prison because of fear of criminal reprisals, was cheered and congratulated by 20 fellow officers as he left the dock at Southwark Crown Court, London.

Sgt Adams, 39, supported by his wife Sue, said afterwards: "It has been a nightmare, absolutely terrible. My world fell apart. I was traumatised, having nightmares and not sleeping."

He had been jailed for 28

days by Bow Street magistrates last January on a charge of assault against the boy at Harrow police station in February 1995. He was released after 24 hours pending appeal.

Yesterday Judge Rivlin, QC, rejected the evidence of a police officer who was the main prosecution witness. He said there was too much evidence contradicting PC James Carter, 38, who said he saw Sgt Adams grab the boy by the throat and push him against a wall.

Michael Bromley-Carter, representing Sgt Adams, said: "Carter misconstrued and exaggerated what happened." Sgt Adams said he had used "reasonable force" to restrain the boy, who was lashing out with his arms and legs.



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Kew faces first strike in over two centuries

By ROBIN YOUNG

FOR the first time since their creation in 1759 the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew are facing strike action.

Eighty members of the GMB general union voted yesterday to down tools next Friday for the day in protest at last year's pay settlement which, they say, will leave many of them with increases of less than 1 per cent.

Paul Moloney, GMB's regional organiser, said: "The pay award was supposed to take effect at the beginning of last July, but we have negotiated this long to get nowhere. We have tried everything to reach a satisfactory agreement. Our members are very reluctant to do anything that might harm the well-being of the world's greatest collection of plants and flowers."

Maureen Long, head of people, planning and development at the gardens, in south-west London, said the award gave an average increase of 6½ per cent, and compared favourably with other government-funded organisations, where increases averaged 3 per cent. She said: "Only six of 154 staff in the grade affected will have rises under 1 per cent, and they are people who

have been judged to be underperforming." Ms Long said that the gardens, which receive an annual grant-in-aid of £15.5 million and attract one million visitors a year, had not received extra money for pay increases for the past three years. "We will be meeting the GMB on Monday and hope that it will be possible to reach an agreement," she said.

Kew originated from the royal gardens of Queen Caroline, wife of George II, and her daughter-in-law, Princess Augusta, the mother of George III. They were presented to the nation by Queen Victoria and opened to the public in 1841. Under the National Heritage Act 1983 a board of trustees was formed to administer the gardens.

Kew carries out research into plant sciences. The emphasis is on plant conservation and biodiversity.

The collection of more than 40,000 plants in 300 acres of grounds includes several species extinct in the wild and thousands whose future is threatened. Admission charges to the gardens, which were only 1p as recently as 1979, were increased to £4.50 last month.



Doug Goodyer, Hever Castle's head gardener, among the snowdrops yesterday, when the 186 acres of grounds reopened for daily public viewing until next winter

Astor's Hever vision grows into garden of the year

By MICHAEL HORNSEY
COUNTRYSIDE CORRESPONDENT

HEVER CASTLE, Kent, the childhood home of Anne Boleyn, has won the 1995 Garden of the Year Award, sponsored by the Historic Houses Association and Christie's. The 186 acres of grounds are largely the Edwardian creation of William Astor, the American multimillionaire who bought Hever in 1903.

Peter Sinclair, executive secretary of the association, said the 12th annual award reflected "not only the horticultural interest of the garden,

which is high, but the public enjoyment it has given". Last year there were 260,000 visitors to Hever. The award is based on a postal ballot of the association's 12,000 "friends".

Doug Goodyer, the head gardener and the fourth generation of his family to work on the estate, said: "At this time of year the most spectacular sight is the banks of snowdrops in front of the castle. In the next few weeks we shall see great golden carpets of daffodils. The Astors planted a ton of daffodil bulbs in each of the 80 years they were here."

Another feature of the estate is the

Italian garden, with vines climbing over pergolas, arches and waterfalls, and a display of urns, statues, columns and sarcophagi that Astor collected while American ambassador to Italy in the 1880s.

Hever, near Edenbridge, began life as a 13th-century moated manor house. Two hundred years later it was acquired by the Boleyn family and there Henry VIII courted Anne Boleyn. A sheltered enclosure next to the maze known as Anne Boleyn's Garden is kept as it might have looked in Tudor times, with beds of

herbs and roses round a fountain. On acquiring Hever, Astor added the "Tudor village", a picturesque jumble of cottages, linked by a covered bridge across the moat to the castle, where he housed the family, guests and servants. The complex is now hired out as a conference centre.

The grounds were laid out between 1904 and 1908 but are only now reaching maturity. Trees were transported to the estate from Ashdown Forest, 12 miles away, and 800 men were employed to dig a 35-acre lake, which took them two years. There are 35 acres of orna-

mental gardens, 100 acres of grass and a 16-acre arboretum. The Astors, who owned The Times from 1922 to 1966, sold the estate in 1983 to John and Faith Guthrie, who run a Yorkshire-based property company. Gardens open daily from March 1 to November 30, 11am to 5pm (5pm from October). Castle opens at noon. Admission for adults: £6 for castle and gardens, £4.40 for gardens only. Discounts for children and pensioners.

Gardening
Weekend page 4

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Growers plan return to days of wine and roses

By ALAN TOOGOOD, HORTICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

ROSE-GROWERS are attempting to reverse the decline of a flower that once graced almost every garden in the land. In 30 years, annual sales have fallen from 57 million to 17 million.

In an effort to restore the flower to pre-eminence, growers, breeders and retailers have declared 1996 Year of the Rose. Events will open with National Rose Week, from next Saturday, organised by the British Rose Growers Association and the Horticultural Trades Association.

Robert Boswijk, of the growers' association, said that many people avoided roses, fearing they required a lot for work, "but pruning has been simplified and modern kinds of roses are far less prone to diseases."

Gardens are smaller these days, and roses have faced keen competition from the range of other plants now

available from garden centres, particularly flowering shrubs, such as potentillas and viburnums. "Roses are just as good if not better value," Mr Boswijk said. "A £5 rose will last for 25 years and will bloom from June until the first frosts."

The future lies with new varieties of rose, better adapted to less spacious circumstances than those of old.

The modern shrub roses, larger plants suitable for mixed borders, flower throughout the summer. Rose-breeders have produced hybrids that combine the fragrance and flower shape of the old with the health, vigour and recurrent flowering of the new. David Austin, of Wolverhampton, has produced many cultivars, such as the rich pink "Gertrude Jekyll".



The Gertrude Jekyll, bred by David Austin

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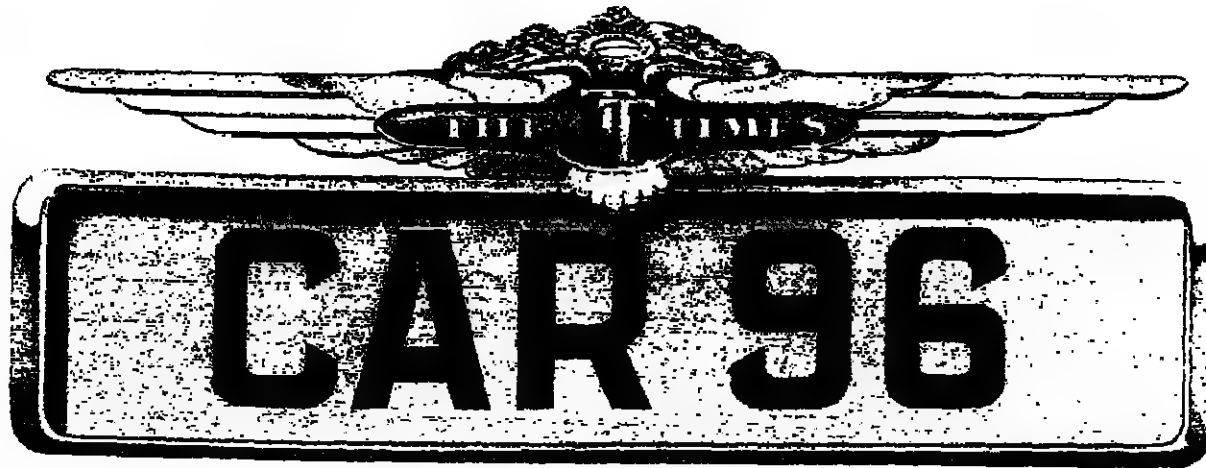
*FOR EXAMPLE THE ABOVE COMPLETE KITCHEN COMPRISES: 8 CABINETS: 1000mm H-Line Base Unit x 3, 1000mm Full Height Wall Unit x 2, 600mm Sink Under Over Hanging Unit, 600mm Hob Unit, 600mm 3 Drawer Base Unit. ACCESSORIES: Stainless Steel Lay-on-Sink (SINKS/21/22), Waste and Overflow, Tap (TAP 1100), Worktop 30mm x 3m x 1, Worktop 30mm x 1m x 1. APPLIANCES: Gas Electric Oven, Microwave (MWA 2511/22), Gas Hob, Mains or White (MWA 1110/22), Extractor, Mains or White (MWA 2511/22), Integrated Dishwasher (DFA 2212/22).

مكتبة من الأصل



Supercar
maker and
a tractor
for all
seasons

Page 5



Flying
wife who
wins in
a pink
Peugeot

Page 3



SATURDAY MARCH 2 1996

Vaughan Freeman on the 160mph car designed for women by women

Jaguar's XK8, the female of the species



Female-friendly: Jaguar predicts that up to a quarter of the £45,000-plus XK8s will be bought by women

Sex-on-wheels sports cars that cost more than £40,000 and top 160mph usually go hand-in-stringback-glove with hairy chests, oil-grimed nails and a large dollop of aggressive male hormones — but not any longer.

Jaguar's XK8, direct descendant of the sports XJS and spiritual successor to the E-type phallus, has been designed and crafted by women, and will be targeted at women by female Jaguar marketing and promotion executives.

The XK8 will take centre stage when it is unveiled at next week's Geneva Motor Show. Jaguar plans to build 12,000 in the first year of full production and will eventually sell up to 16,000 a year worldwide.

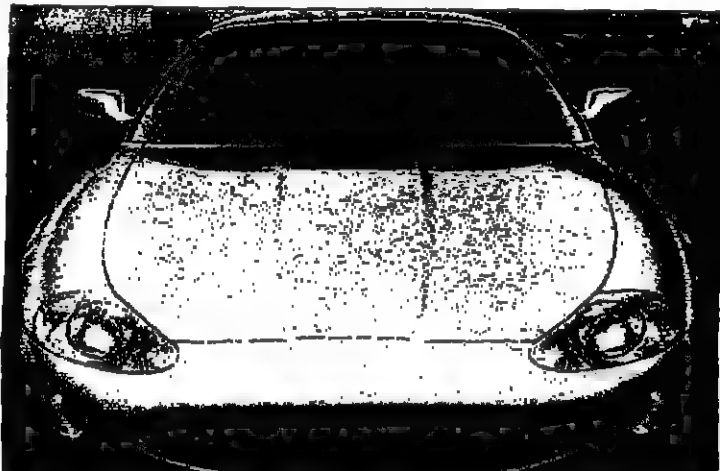
The company predicts that up to a quarter of all XK8s will be bought by women, and in the vital North American market that figure will be more than a third.

The challenge has been to make this 300bhp, 4-litre, 32-valve V8 sports car "female-friendly" without turning it into a "girly" car disdained by ego-fragile males. Performance will better that of the Mercedes-Benz SL500, which means a top speed of 160mph and a 0-60mph time of under six seconds. When it goes on sale in October it will be priced between £45,000 and £50,000.

Jaguar chairman Nick Scheele says: "The car will be particularly attractive to professional women who are out to make a statement. Women don't buy cars because they are a pretty pastel shade. They buy cars because they deliver what they want, and right from day one on the XK8 project we have had a number of women on the team.

"With their input we have ensured there is enough clearance around door pulls and release catches so that they can be used without breaking nails. The handbrake has been designed so that it does not snag on skirts, radio buttons can be used comfortably by slender fingers. Door clearances have been designed so that a woman wearing a skirt or a dress can get in and out without difficulties."

The XK8 is the result of nearly three years work by a 30-strong Jaguar team led by chief designer Geoff Lawson. The same people were behind the present XJ6 saloon series, voted most beautiful car in



Good-looker: from the same design team that produced the XJ6 saloon

THE NEW BUYERS

● Women are the new power in car buying, according to the latest figures from the *Lux Report on Motoring*. Researchers discovered women bought more new cars last year than men — a fact underlined by manufacturers.

● Women account for 63 per cent of sales of the Tigra, Vauxhall's coupé obviously appealing to feminine instincts. The buyers are typically aged between 25 and 40, have a professional or managerial job, enjoy fitness, travel and entertaining and list style as a key reason for their choice.

● And even when a man buys a car, his wife or girlfriend is likely to play a key part.

the cars and told the engineers if, for example, switches were too difficult to use if you have got nails. We gave them our first-hand views and the designers were good in recognising how important ladies are. With all our cars we have to consider the lady's point of view. Around the world more ladies are driving Jaguars and we recognise that they have a big influence on what their partner buys and drives.

Women-only driving events, run in conjunction with Clarins skin care so that female customers can drive and "get pampered", plus ladies' golf days, will be a central marketing tool once the XK8 goes on sale.

Promotions manager Elizabeth Baker believes the beauty of the car, and the way its power is made manageable, will prove a winner for men and women: "The XK8 is very driveable for a female, very comfortable and not hard work at all. A lot of work has gone into the ergonomics to make sure that drivers, male or female, whatever their weight or size or height, can find a comfortable driving position in it."

"We need to recognise that there are a lot of successful professional ladies that would drive this car, and this is an opportunity we need to take advantage of without excluding males."

Karen Anderson, who heads the car's design and trim team, has been at the sharp end in making the car attractive to everyone. "I have been trying to emphasise the car's shape, one of the features that make



Karen Anderson: "It harks back to the E-type in its shape and is more feminine, but without any loss of the car's aggressive stance"

it appealing to the two sexes," she said. "It harks back to the E-type in its shape and has more of a unisex look, away from hard edges, and is more feminine, but without any loss of the car's aggressive stance."

Anderson and her team have developed new ranges of metallic and pearlescent colours for the car to give customers, especially women, as wide a choice as possible. Inside, lighter shades have been introduced, although, says Anderson, the classic, traditional Jaguar leather and wood trim has always been popular with women.

"I don't think anybody is going to

see the XK8 as a female car," she added. "It has got a presence about it and it makes a statement, and that statement is that this is the car that is going to take Jaguar into the next century."

Jaguar finance director Bibiana Boerio, who heads the XK8 sales campaign, had huge fun while test-driving the car and feeding her impressions back to the engineers. Producing a new car is a complex and costly business, but for Boerio, Jaguar's latest venture brought to her job huge fun.

"Making sure things go right for

the customer does not mean putting a pink colour in for the women and being condescending," she said. "I just want my car to go like hell and be safe and secure, offer good comfort and go well round the curves. I am an enthusiastic driver. I recall one stretch of road when I was driving the XK8 and we were behind a truck for quite some time.

"There was an open stretch leading up to a curve and I was able to overtake, and the feeling as the accelerator and the whole powertrain combined was really smooth, quick and responsive. I just thought 'Oh wow!'"

Male or female, it is that "Oh

wow!" factor, for looks and performance, that will decide whether or not XK8 is worthy successor to the E-Type heritage.

And why XK8? Jaguar searched long and hard for the right name for its new car. The F-type (following the E-type) was ruled out because Ferrari already has a couple of "F" cars.

The letters XK have adorned some of the fastest and best looking Jaguars in the past. So the letters carry on Jaguar's sports heritage, while the 8 is a tribute to the engine, Jaguar's first V8 even if it is built at Ford's Bridgend plant in South Wales.

Would you describe a Picasso as second-hand?



Mercedes-Benz
Used Cars

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AA GRIDLOCK GUIDE

LONDON
A40 Western Avenue, Acton. Major roadworks with contraflow between Hilary Road in Acton and the Northern roundabout in White City.

A406 North Circular Road, Upper Edmonstone. Major roadworks continue over the Lea Valley Viaduct.

A406 North Circular Road, Finchley. Major roadworks continue with various restrictions between the A1 and A1000 junctions.

A12 Eastern Avenue, Wandsworth. Construction of M11 link road continues, with eastbound reduced to a single lane between the Redbridge roundabout and High Street.

A243 Leatherhead Road, Chessington. Closed northbound for major roadworks outside the Chessington World of Adventure. Lengthy diversions cause delays back to junction 9 of the M25 at peak times.

A4 Great West Road, Chiswick. Between 9pm and 6am Monday-Thursday nights reduced to one lane each way for repairs to the crumbling elevated section of the M4 above.

SOUTH-EAST
M4 Berkshire. Major roadworks and contraflow between junctions 6 and 8/9 cause lengthy tailbacks daily.

M25 Surrey. Two sections of widening work, with lane closures and contraflows between junctions 6 and 8 and junctions 9 and 10.

M1 Hertfordshire. Resurfacing and widening work on northbound exit at junction 6. The sliproad is sometimes closed overnight, with diversions via junction 5 and the A41.

A247 Surrey. Road works on the street between Clondont Station and Clondont Park. Long delays expected.

A509 Buckinghamshire. Major roadworks on the Watlington Road in Olney, at junction with Lavendon Road.

A264 Sussex. Delays expected through East Grinstead town centre due to roadworks on Holye Road, Portland Land and Most Road.

A249 Kent. Major works at the Stockbury roundabout west of Sittingbourne often cause lengthy hold-ups between the M2 and Kingsferry Bridge.

A36 Hampshire. Bridge repairs at Wellow, north-west of Southampton.

SOUTH-WEST
M4/M5 Avon. Work on the second Severn crossing continues, with restrictions around the Almondsbury & Aust interchanges, and also on the M5 around junction 18.

M32 Avon. Contraflow for major roadworks between junctions 1 and 2. Southbound entry slip at junction 1, is also closed off peak.

A4 Avon. Lane restrictions and temporary lights over the Newbridge Bridge, Bath.

M5 Somerset. Bridge repairs with lane closures both ways between junctions 21 and 22.

A40 Gloucestershire. Golden Valley Bypass (between Gloucester and Cheltenham) reduced to a single lane each way over junction 11 of the M5.

A30 Cornwall. Roadworks and a contraflow near Bolventor.

A377 Devon. Roadworks continue around Eggesford, between Exeter and Barnstaple, with temporary lights around the clock.

MIDLANDS AND EAST ANGLIA
M6 West Midlands. Major roadworks continue between junctions 5 and 6 with lane restrictions in both directions.

A8 Leicestershire. Major roadworks and contraflow at Lockington, between junction 24 of the M1 and Sawley Island.

M69 Leicestershire. Link road from the M69 to M1 northbound closed at junction 21. A short diversion is in operation via the roundabout.

A1 Nottinghamshire. Roadworks on the Apley Head roundabout near Worksop (junction with the A57 and A614) cause peak-time delays.

A47 Norfolk. Two sets of major roadworks: at Tetterton St John and at Swaffham.

A11 Norfolk. Construction of Wymondham bypass continues, with lane and speed restrictions between Hethersett and Attleborough.

M6 Staffordshire. North and southbound entry sliproads on to motorway closed at junction 11 while work is carried out on the A460.

NORTH
M1 West Yorkshire. Roadworks and contraflow at the end of the motorway at junction 47.

M6 Cheshire. Widening work continues between junctions 20 and 21.

M6 Greater Manchester. Roadworks and lane closures between junctions 24 and 26.

A5063 Greater Manchester. Major roadworks and lane closures on Trafford Road near junction with Pomona Strand.

A630 South Yorkshire. Major roadworks and contraflow on the Rotherway at Cardlow, between junction 33 of the M1 and Rotherham.

A167M Tyne-side. Northbound lane closures on the Newcastle central motorway near the Jesmond Road Interchange.

WALES
M4 Gwent. Widening work continues in connection with the second Severn crossing between junctions 22 and 24.

A48 West Glamorgan. Construction work with lane closures on all approaches to the Wychtree roundabout at Morriston.

A483 West Glamorgan. Major roadworks and contraflow on Felton Way, Swansea between Elba Crescent and the Earlwood lights.

A4229 Mid Glamorgan. Roadworks and temporary lights between Cornelly and Porthcawl.

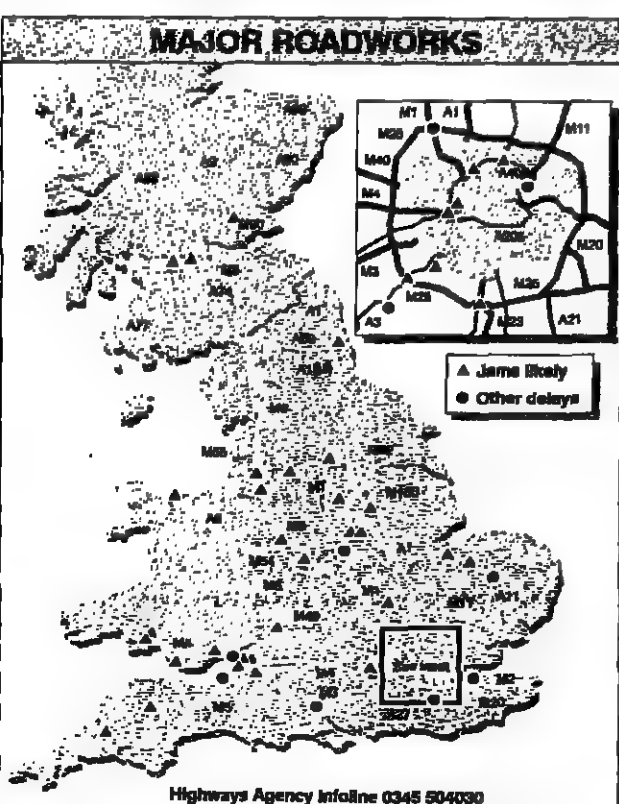
A547 Gwynedd. Bridge repairs with temporary lights near the A55 junction at Llandudno Junction.

SCOTLAND
M8 Strathclyde. Westbound exit at junction 27 (Ardkeen) closed. An alternative route can be taken via junction 28 or junction 29.

A749 Strathclyde. Dalnarnock Bridge in Glasgow is closed southbound.

M90 Tayside. Major roadworks at junction 10 with lane closures in both directions.

NORTHERN IRELAND
County Tyrone. Roadworks on the Omagh Bypass at the junction with Derry Road.



Highways Agency InfoLine 0345 504030

NEWS IN BRIEF

Write level

THE PASS mark for the new written section of the driving test which comes into effect on July 1 will be 26 correct answers out of 35, the Driving Standards Association announced this week. The British School of Motoring has set up a freephone hotline to answer any queries and anxieties about the new test: 0800 700 800. Its instructors are undergoing special training to help learners with the new requirements.

At the hirer's risk

SPOT CHECKS on vans for hire have revealed many dangerous faults, according to the RAC. Vans hired in Plymouth, Manchester and Cardiff had faults including large rust holes in bodywork and major problems with brakes and suspensions. The tests, carried out with Auto Express, also revealed that many companies failed to complete paperwork which could cause legal problems. The RAC recommends hiring only from members of the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association.

Esprit GT1 debut

THE ALL-NEW Lotus Esprit GT1 sports racing car, which features the company's new V8 turbo engine, makes its debut in the International GT Championship race at the Paul Ricard circuit in France tomorrow. One car is entered in this first race of the season to be driven by Jan Lammers and Alex Portman.

As the British motorist suffers and the Government does nothing but take the money, there is only one answer

May it please Your Majesty...

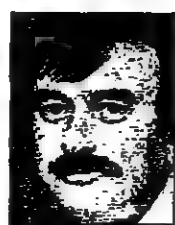
Sir Richard Scott cannot be the only man on the planet with a briefcase full of double negatives and a personal dictionary in which "deliberately" does not mean the same as "deliberately". I feel sure I speak for the entire motoring public in asserting that our own machine tools—the ones with a wheel at each corner—deserve at least as much attention as anything despatched to Saddam Hussein.

Indeed, we deserve better than a mere inquiry. What we need is a royal commission, no less, and I offer the suggestion on the persuasive basis that it could surely get John Major off the hook at the forthcoming general election.

My thoughts are inspired by a piece on this page last week in which it was demonstrated that not only is the motorist paying the Government nearly four times as much as the Government invests in the motorist, but also that our trunk roads are fast heading for a time when we shall all have to get out and start walking.

The situation has been brought

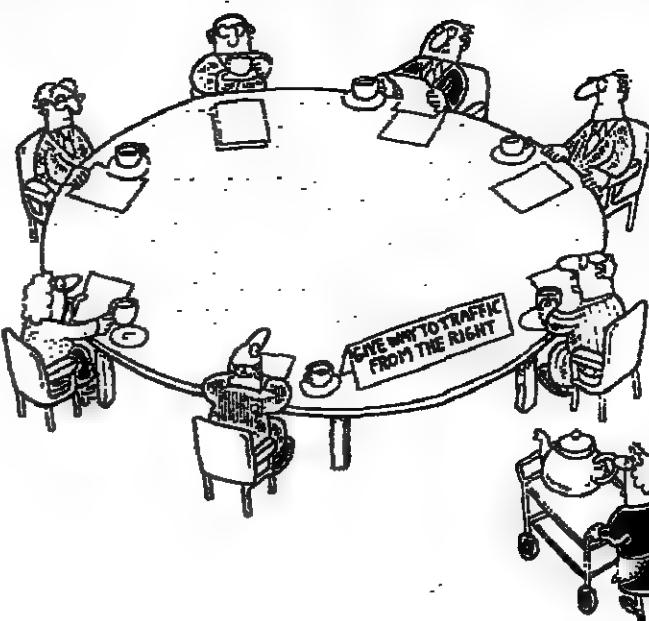
DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION



Peter Barnard

about by the human condition, therefore there is no point hoping it will go away. It is a fact of the human condition that the car in front, whether or not it is a Toyota, is driven by a person who ought to be travelling on a train or a bus. But that person is never us. And the plight of the motorist is compounded by the fact that trains and buses are now in private hands, thus they have to make a profit.

The Government appears to see



nothing anomalous in a situation where, as we reported last week, for every £10 the car driver spends on fuel, £7.50 goes to the Treasury but only £2 is reinvested in roads. If this principle applied to the television licence, all of which goes to the BBC, there would be uproar. So, in the time-honoured phrase, something must be done.

Bypasses, gridlocks, motorway repairs, petrol costs, road tax, buses, trains, planes and donkey carts...

all these are liable to get an airing in the election campaign, and no good can come of it for Mr Major. Unless, of course, he is able to say: "Nothing to do with me". And a royal commission is just the body to enable him to say it.

Royal commissions were very fashionable in the 1960s and 1970s but went out of favour with the coming to power of Margaret Thatcher, who knew what was good for us. Now that mere mortals are

back in charge, the royal commission's time has come again.

The Royal Commission on Transport would be chaired by a Scott-type and made up of others from among the great and the good, including some people nominated by the political parties (thus giving politicians of all sides no excuse to rubbish the findings). It would be charged with producing, at long last, an integrated transport policy. This would in itself be a huge step forward, for at present there is no discernible policy and such policy as there was has plainly disintegrated.

I hope Mr Major will take up this proposal double-quick, for I am fed up with listening to politicians of all parties raking part in a dialogue of the deaf. This is not the way for a civilised country to resolve the question of the best way to get from A to B.

Aha, you may ask, but what exactly will happen to this commission's report? A good question. This week Professor (now Sir) Colin Buchanan, author of the lauded 1964 report on traffic in towns, was escorted round the city of Bath by a television crew and asked what progress had been made.

Very little, was his conclusion, and very slowly. But for all his eminence, Buchanan lacked the weight of a royal commission, which is why I believe that device would be less easy to sweep under the carpet.

Death toll of waiting for a Euro decision

Laws to give cars better crash protection have been agreed, but only after ten years of arguments. Kevin Eason reports

More than 17 people died every day that bureaucrats were unable to agree on life-saving crash legislation to make new cars stronger and safer.

Euro MPs this week finally voted to implement legislation which means all new cars will be forced to pass radical side impact crash tests from October 1998. But even as motorist organisations claimed victory in their long fight to have the new laws introduced, they pointed to figures which showed thousands of lives lost during the ten years while European Union officials argued over technicalities.

Some nations deliberately employed tactics to hold up the new tests. New laws on frontal impacts are also still not ready to go ahead while Europe argues over details in the legislation, even though motorist organisations calculate that offset crashes cause 65,000 deaths and serious injuries a year.

The French government is thought to have led the decision to put a brake on more extensive testing, although the RAC and Federation Internationale de l'Automobile claim other governments were just as guilty of delay.

Even when the principle of side impacts was accepted by all member governments, officials could not agree at which height a barrier should hit cars for maximum validity. So paperwork was passed around Brussels and meetings took place over years—at the same time that lives were being lost.

The RAC claims that 650 people die in side impact collisions annually in Britain, and 6,500 in Europe while there are 18,500 serious injuries. Europe currently has no legislation for side impacts in which vehicles and objects smash through car doors and into the cabin. When that happens, seat belts and airbags are of little or no use to driver and passenger.

Motorist organisations have been frustrated by the inability of the European Commission to come to a decision, even though the United States has had a compulsory side impact crash test for

some time. That means cars manufactured in Europe and sold in the US have had to pass the severe tests, but cars made and sold here have not had to have any special extra protection by law. Mercedes-Benz, for example, has been putting its cars through side impact testing for years even though it was not required to in Europe.

The FIA, the body which controls world motor racing and has been at the forefront of improvements to safety in

facturers to concentrate their minds on making cars safer. We need protection so that if a car is hit from the side by another vehicle, it is not going to come in and crush you."

Alan Donnelly, the MEP who pushed in the European Parliament for tougher testing, condemned the "deliberate delaying tactics by some member states that resulted in years of wasted argument."

He added: "I find it extraordinary that so little information is available to consumers to help them choose cars which protect them and their families. The problem is that governments have been content to work to the lowest common denominator, which has been allowed to hold back improvements over the past 20 years. That is to nobody's credit, although we have finally made progress through the European Parliament."

The strange machinations behind closed doors of the European Community have baffled even the lobbyists from the RAC and FIA. The finger of blame has not pointed firmly at any nation, although there were no doubts that some major carmakers were putting pressure on their governments not to implement the tougher crash regulations.

There also seem to be no clear reasons why they should want delays, particularly as an increasingly global industry benefits from having standards to which every company knows it has to conform. Strengthening current cars to pass tougher side impact tests would be expensive, involving considerable redesigning for some models, but there was no suggestion that legislation would be retrospective to include cars currently in production. Models are already being designed with side protection, such as the Fiat Punto, which Mosley singled out as a small car that could pass the new test. There could be a substantial weight penalty from fitting tough steel beams to doors and frames, resulting in poorer fuel economy. But every manufacturer would face the same penalty and past experience shows that legislation often forces a clever technological solution.

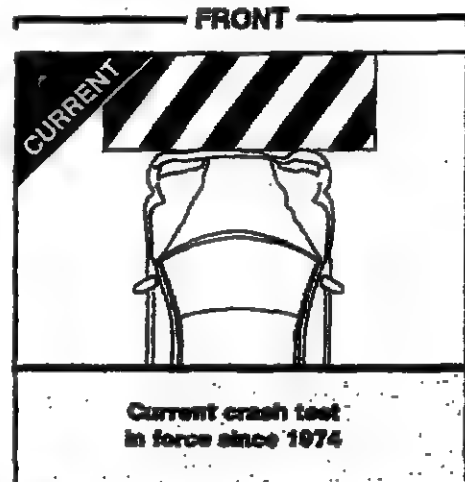


GERHARD BERGER, Benetton Formula One driver, helped persuade Euro MPs to vote for the new tests. Bureaucrats argued for an offset crash, and side impact 250mm above ground level (bottom graphic), which cars could pass now.

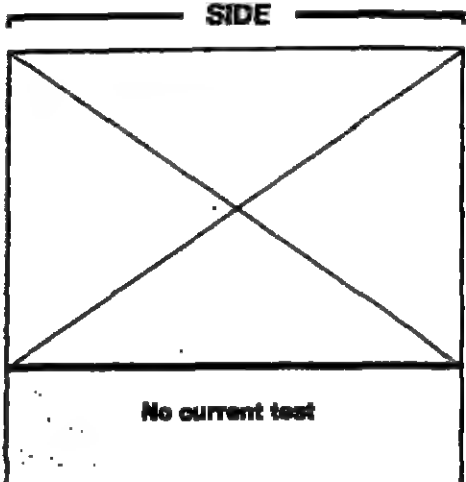
grand prix cars, has led the fight for more stringent crash tests in Europe.

Max Mosley, FIA president, condemned "frustration and delays" which have meant that Europe has had no improvements or changes to crash tests for the past 22 years.

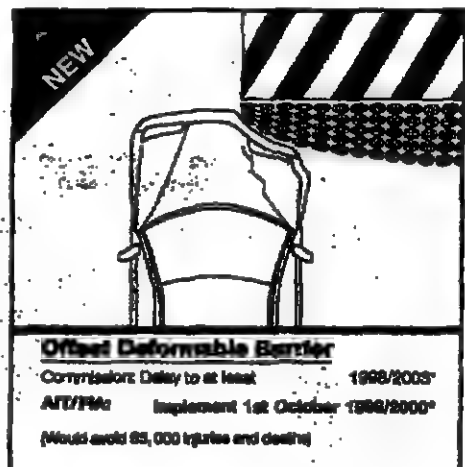
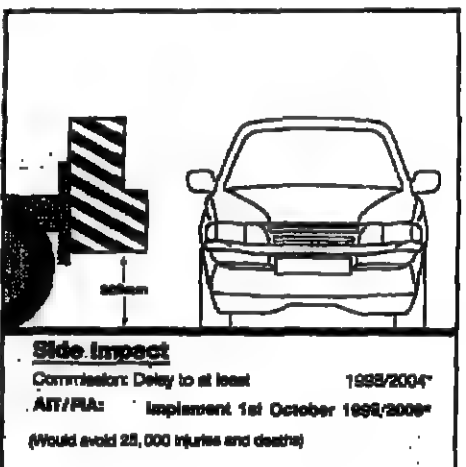
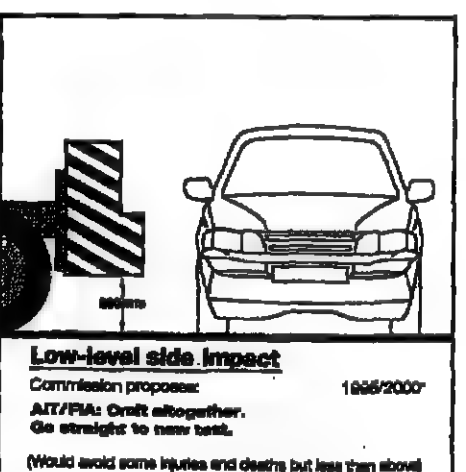
"It is ridiculous," he said, "that the only way we test the strength of cars is by smashing them head first into a brick wall. Everyone knows that accidents do not happen that conveniently and that collisions come from the side or are offset at the front. We have to have a test which forces manu-



Current crash test in force since 1974



No current test

Offset Deformable Barrier
Commission: Delay to at least 1998/2000
AT/PA: Implement 1st October 1998/2000*
(Would avoid 65,000 injuries and deaths)Side Impact
Commission: Delay to at least 1998/2000
AT/PA: Implement 1st October 1998/2000*
(Would avoid 25,000 injuries and deaths)Angled Rigid Barrier
Commission: proposed
AT/PA: Omit altogether. Go straight to new test.
(Would avoid 10 injuries and deaths)Low-level side impact
Commission: proposed
AT/PA: Omit altogether. Go straight to new test.
(Would avoid some injuries and deaths but less than above)

Current crash tests, top, what officials proposed, bottom, and what will happen, centre

HOW MR BROWN DROVE INTO HISTORY 170 YEARS AGO

IN THIS centenary year of the UK motor industry, a great deal has been written about the pioneers of the late 19th century. But only now has Samuel Brown been mentioned. That is partly because his contribution was made 70 years before the Daimler Company produced its first car in Coventry, writes Alan Capps.

As long ago as 1826, Brown, believing that the newfangled steam coaches then appearing on the roads were of limited potential, built his own car using a primitive engine and drove up Shooter's Hill in London. What little is known of his story is told by Richard Sutton in a new book, *Motor Mania*, which accompanies a Channel 4 series starting on Tuesday.

"Brown's achievement, although little documented,

was monumental, because he not only succeeded in designing the first internal-combustion engine (using a slow-burning fuel principle rather than an explosion of gas) but also demonstrated it in what was perhaps the world's first automobile," he says.

Unfortunately, the big money was all on steam. Brown's invention was shelved and very little is now known of its engineering

principles. It was not until 27 years later that the Italians Eugenio Barsanti, a priest, and Felice Matteucci, an engineer, patented the world's first gas engine, a development of which the Belgian Jean Lenoir used in his carriage that he drove in Paris in 1862. That machine helped to inspire Gottlieb Daimler and Nicholas Otto, who really got the world moving 20 years later.

Motor Mania book offer

Save £2 on rrp and get free p&p

Readers of CAR 96 can obtain *Motor Mania* by Richard Sutton at a special price of £14.99 (p&p free) direct from the publishers Collins & Brown. This is a saving of £2 on the recommended retail price plus £2 on postage and packing.

To order a copy call the order hotline on 01403 710851 quoting *The Times/Motor Mania* offer ref C-01-H. The line is open from Monday-Friday and orders can be paid by credit card or cheque. Despatch is usually within two days and guaranteed within 28 days.

The first *Motor Mania* programme on Channel 4 is broadcast on Tuesday March 5 at 8pm.

ORDER HOTLINE 01403 710851

AUTOFAX by David Long and Les Evans

SKODA WAS ONCE ACTUALLY ENTERED GRAND PRIX RACING. THE FIRST CAR WAS THE SUPER HESPERID-SUTRA AND THE COMPANY ALSO SUPPLIED COMPONENTS FOR THE QUEEN MARY.

ROSE CHANGES IN SUTTON. COOPERATED HAVE BEEN LEFT OUT IN THE COLD AFTER SHINING FROM A B.B.C. RADIO NIGHT ACTIVATED THEIR CENTRAL LOCKING SYSTEM.

ONE OF THE GREATEST RACING DRIVERS OF THE 1950'S, ARNOLD SCOTT-BERCHIN WAS BORN WITHOUT A RIGHT HAND.

ROCK STAR JON BEN JON AND PRESIDENT TO SERVE FOR A SECOND HAND MORGAN AS BURNING WAS UNABLE TO JUMP THE COMPANY'S FANCY FIVE-DOOR WAITING LIST.

The slope was mountainous, the mud horrendous, the drivers nervous... Kevin Eason watched the results

It can be awfully hard to rise to the occasion

By the time Andrew Pack reached the top, the blood had drained out of his face and into the muddied hubcaps of his Vauxhall Frontera. It had all seemed so easy at the start... until he looked through his rain-streaked windscreen at the sheer face of mud that confronted him. This was a driver more used to navigating the tricky twists and turns of Sainsbury's car park than something that looked like the North Face of the Eiger covered in glue. It was going to be one of those days.

But Andrew and his wife, Caron, were in good company. Dozens of motorists with four-wheel-drive vehicles, whose only previous experience of off-roading was parking with two wheels on the pavement, were facing 80 miles of stomach-heaving, suspension-graunching rough track.

The Midland Auto Trader 4 Wheel Drive Day is the one chance in the year that they get to do what their cars were designed to do. They turned up in the car park of the Haycock Hotel in Wansford on the outskirts of Peterborough, paid their entrance fee and, with some rigorous advice and careful marshalling, ploughed around the quarries and fields of Cambridgeshire up to their bonnet badges in water and mud for the day.

The fact that they were going off road at all was extraordinary enough, for members of the 4x4 tribe are notoriously known as wimps with more money than sense. There is little sadder sight in the world of motoring than owners of cars built like tanks who swoon when their precious upholstery is sullied by as much as a crumb from an errant Digestive.

Even worse are the manufacturers, who build vehicles that look as though they could bulldoze their way through a sheet of steel when the nearest they will get to going off road is on the gravel drive to the front door. In the commercials, their vehicles can go straight up the side of a glacier with the driver filing his nails and working out next week's shopping list; in reality, some of these machines struggle to cope with the gradient of a sleeping policeman.

At least the drivers who turned out last week now know what their vehicles can — and, more significantly for some — can't do. And did they get the chance to find out.

The rain was bouncing off the windscreen like mortar shells as they set off for the notorious hill climb. The terrified expressions on the faces of the first-time off-roaders were almost moving, like watching troops about to go over the top on the battlefield of the Somme. The first sheer 50-foot drop was more a test of nerve than skill, simply because the driver had to shove the gearbox into low ratio, select first gear, nose to the precipice and then let the vehicle drop over the edge — no hands required, no feet on the pedals.

Tracey Griggs, a first-timer in a Ford Maverick, co-driver Lynda Hodgkinson, admitted that she gulped at that moment: "It is one thing for the instructors to tell you to take your feet off the pedals, but



Andrew and Caron Pack's Vauxhall Frontera after its mudbath



First-timer Tracey Griggs: "The instinct is to go for the brakes"

it is another thing when you look over the edge. The instinct is to go for the brakes."

Added Lynda: "I just wanted to get out."

So did Andrew Pack. I suspect. While Tracey and Lynda were on their breathless way down, Andrew was attempting to go up — spectacularly unsuccessfully, as it turned out. Brow furrowed and jaw set, he pointed the bull bars of the silver Frontera at the hill and gunned the turbo-diesel... which resulted in the wheels spinning and the tyres throwing up a spectacular mud fountain before the car slithered gently back into the mud pond at the bottom to squat like a bullfrog on a lily pad.

The answer was to try a less — but not much — steep way out. Tim

Nicol paved the way in his Land Rover Discovery, whizzing up the muddy slope, the big Disco barely breaking into a trot. Tim and his wife, Joanne, bought the Discovery a couple of years ago and were hooked on off-roading at last year's event, even buying a set of off-road wheels and tyres. The practice obviously helped, because the couple went on to win the event and the prize of a weekend break for two, rally jackets and champagne.

The Nicols were among the motorists much admired by Simon Morris, one of the organisers. "The great thing is that people bring their own vehicles and risk their shiny paintwork," he said. "We had a guy last year who had bought his Range Rover a couple of weeks before and just about wrecked the

vehicle. But he had a fantastic time and discovered how good his car was off road. People who do this course love it."

Meanwhile, Andrew's Frontera was sliding serenely backwards down the gentler slope for the second time. Caron's expression was one of patient fortitude, almost understanding the time-consuming virtue of trying and trying again.

Perhaps they could study the technique of another driver for some tips. Not much help there though: next up was Jim Townley, Midland Auto Trader's marketing manager, whose effort was so wonderfully hopeless that he won the official "Wally" award. He cut

the power of his Maverick at the vital moment and spun the steering wheel, which turned the car sideways. As soon as it stopped, the Maverick teetered ready to tip over and slide back down the hill on its side. The marshalls' helpful advice was for Jim's girlfriend Mel to cuddle up to her embarrassed driver to transfer the weight and keep the Maverick upright until they could winch the pair to safety.

Andrew and Caron were still all alone at the bottom of a hill that could have been Everest surrounded by barbed wire for all their chances of getting over it. As they waited, a black streak flashed by: it was the Maverick of Paul Radisich, the British Touring Cars champion who had swapped the race track for the mud track. What his approach

lacked in subtlety was more than compensated by speed. It didn't seem to matter what size the obstacle was, he simply pressed the accelerator to the floor, pointed the bonnet and hoped for the best. He seemed to emerge from the hill at 120mph, presumably contemplating a handbrake turn at the top.

Seeing the flying Maverick can't have done much for confidence in the Pack's Frontera as it sat forlornly on caked mud wheels that had once turned so proudly and confidently on tarmac. The marshalls took pity and let them take the easy way out over a gentle, bracken-covered slope. The couple had spent the best part of half an hour in that mud hole, probably wondering whether they would get out in time to complete the rest of

the four-hour course. By the time they finally reached the top, ash-faced Andrew looked as though he had seen quite enough of off-roading and would be happy to go back to rice, gentle driving on flat, black tuff.

"That was a struggle," he ventured cheerfully. The temptation to give up must have been overwhelming, but men like Andrew Pack and the 52 off-roaders taking part were obviously made of sterner stuff. Not for them the wimp's way out, sitting tall in the saddle in the High Street but cowering on the prairie. Andrew tugged at his hat, threw the Frontera back into gear and pointed its nose to rejoin the convoy over the 79 more miles of hill, mud and dale before the finish line.

MUD PACK

At the top and bottom of the slopes

IF YOU want to be King of the Hill, choose wisely. The 4x4 market is divided into Gladiators and cars that get sand kicked into their windcreens. The Midland Auto Trader jaunt separated six-stone weaklings from cars that really could tackle mud and mountains. So here is the Car 96 guide to the best off-roaders.

● **LAND ROVER DEFENDER:** V8-powered, short wheelbase Defenders clambered up gradients that looked beyond everything else except goats. If you are serious about off-roading, the Defender is the original, and remains King of the Mud. Prices — £15,803 to £20,821.

● **LAND ROVER DISCOVERY:** Next best thing, but comes with luxuries and legroom. Ignore Japanese imitations. Prices, £18,676 to £29,335.

● **RANGE ROVER:** Should be too effete for mud-plugging, but will go anywhere while driver and passengers recline in gorgeous comfort, fantastic stereo blaring and drinks chilling in the boot. Nothing else like it, but you need Nick Leeson's chequebook. Prices, £40,000 to £45,550.

● **NISSAN PATROL:** A fine competitor for Range Rover, but lacking the same aura, includes short wheelbase version in the line-up, although 3.5 V8 one to go for. Prices, £18,879 to £26,788.

● **ISUZU TROOPER/VAUXHALL MONTEREY:** Same vehicle, different badges. Second best but capable and cheap, if uncharismatic. Prices, Isuzu: £17,999 to £24,798; Vauxhall: £21,675 to £27,185.

● **VAUXHALL FRONTERA:** Big, butch and about as tough off road as Julian Clary. Ask Andrew Pack. Prices, £14,695 to £19,695.

● **DAIHATSU FOURTRAK/SPORTTRAK:** For those that can't afford the real thing. Cheap and cheerful. Prices, £9,995 to £17,495.

● **SUZUKI VITARA:** Only fashion victims need apply. About as appealing as white stilettos and denim skirt — and about as much use in the mud. Prices, £9,750 to £15,475.

The hand that rocks the cradle goes into higher gear in the fast lane

Helen Mound meets Shelly Taunt, Wiltshire's Flying Housewife and fast-rising star of British rallying

On weekdays, 28-year-old Shelly Taunt is a soft-spoken housewife and mother from Wiltshire. At weekends she swaps her apron for motorsport overalls, climbs behind the wheel of a bright pink Peugeot 205 and thrashes her way through forests and across fields.

In spite of having a 19-month-old son, Stefan, to look after, Shelly is rapidly becoming one of Britain's top rally successes, although after giving up her job as a van driver when he arrived, taking up rally driving and competing in the same top rallies as World Champion, Colin McRae, was about as likely as a date with Kevin Costner.

"Rallying was the furthest thing from my mind when Stefan was born, but here I am, my second year rallying and it's brilliant," she laughs.

She infiltrated the male-dominated sport last year by entering a competition held by a corporate motorsport entertainment company, Shropshire Rally School, and won a scholarship to compete in seven events. With no experience,

the woman who has become the "Flying Housewife" came home with some incredible results, including a victory in the final round of the Teleflorist Ladies Championship. The reward was a drive in the school's bright pink Ford Escort Cosworth and an entry in last year's biggest rally event, the Network Q RAC Rally.

Shelly is clearly elated by her new-found talent. Unfortunately, she had to retire on the second day of the RAC last year because of mechanical problems. The young housewife, with only seven rallies under her belt, might have been 95 places behind the winner, McRae, but she started in 171st position; had the car lasted the whole week, her team is certain Shelly could have pulled off a remarkable placing.

"That's why I have to have another go this year," she says. Supported by a host of sponsors, from Do-It-All to her local life insurance company, Shelly is set to take the 1996 rally scene by storm. Providing she does well, the rally

school has promised her another drive in the Escort Cosworth at this year's RAC.

Her second rally season started last weekend alongside co-driver, Alison Winstanley, at the Bournemouth National Winter Rally where she displayed the same exceptional driving skills she showed last year. Competing in the British National Minix/Teleflorist Ladies Championship, she came second in her class and won the first round of the Teleflorist Coupe des Dames.

Her victory was achieved against the odds with the car suffering a multitude of ailments. "As we crossed the start line on the Bournemouth seafront, the weather turned nasty. We were worried about waves coming on to the road, my wipers weren't working and the rev counter and fuel gauge were broken," she says. "I couldn't see a thing. The tarmac stages weren't too bad but the puddles in the forests were terrible, covering the car in muddy water, and, with no wipers, there was no way I could see where I was going. We were just guessing.



Alison Winstanley, left, and Shelly Taunt: "Rallying was the furthest thing from my mind when Stefan was born"

"Without the rev counter, I just had to wait for the engine to scream before I changed up a gear and towards the end of the rally, I wasn't sure if we'd make it because I had no idea how much fuel we had left. Oh, and the spot lights

weren't working either." "You can't expect an easy ride. At least we didn't have any punctures and we got a lot of help from spectators pushing us when we got stuck," she adds. "I'm chuffed to pieces with the result and even

happier that it was an all-female crew that beat so many male competitors." Shropshire Rally School has found not one, but two lady drivers that could be the fastest women on wheels in the country. Last weekend's rally

might have been tougher for Shelly if team-mate Debbie Garlic had been competing. But the school's number two driver could only enjoy the event as a spectator because her Peugeot 106 Rallye — also bright pink — wasn't ready.

"It's a shame I missed the first rally because it's my local event and I know the route," says Debbie. The 22-year-old student's driving caught the school's attention last year and she was asked to join its ladies' team alongside Shelly. She says: "I haven't got very far in events in the past because I was privately funded and the money was tight."

Debbie has not had as much experience in rallying as most of the drivers she is up against — one season in a Peugeot 309 GTI two years ago and a few events last year in a Vauxhall Astra GSi — but there will be plenty of competition with Shelly at the next rally at Greenwich on March 30.

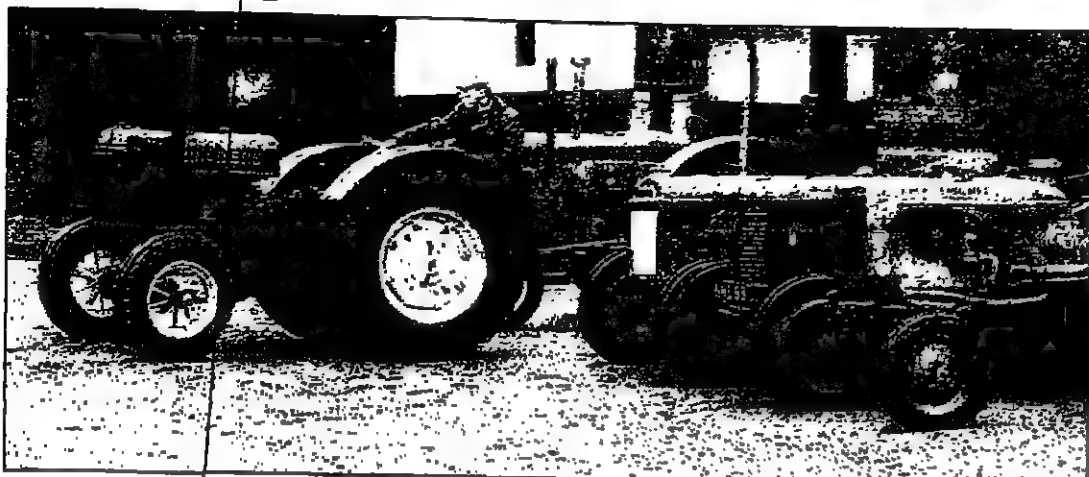
"I haven't worked in a team before with drivers in the same class, so I think there's going to be a lot of competition between us."

But Debbie knows she is up against seriously quick competition in the shape of Shelly. She says: "If there are team orders and I have to stand aside for Shelly, then I will."

And she might have hit the brakes and turn into a layby quick to get out of the way of that other speeding pink Ford — because the "Flying Housewife" is gunning to get past the best of the men.

When Martin Brown was eight he drove his first tractor and discovered a passion. Stuart Birch reports

A collector who is buying his boyhood back



Rural classics: "The most I've paid is £4,000, but a rare type might make £20,000," says Martin

Happier for Martin Brown is a tractor. Any tractor. It's been like that for half a century and now he has a veritable family of them. At the age of eight, while his school friends were collecting Dinky toys and tinplate model vehicles, he was already into the real thing.

"We lived in Wrotham, and I loved watching the farmers using their machinery. One day our farmer neighbour said, 'Can you drive a tractor? He obviously needed help, so I said yes!'"

Martin clambered on to the old Fordson N, mugged with the controls for a moment then set off. "It was towing a binder, which the farmer operated. I was terrified, but I'd ridden on tractors before so I knew pretty well what to do. Also, my father had let me drive his Ford Anglia, so I understood the rudiments of a clutch and gearbox."

Today it is illegal for a child under 13 to drive a tractor on the land, but in the 1940s, health and safety regulations were a shade more lax. The adventure ended without disaster. Martin Brown had become a tractor driver. But in the process he had caught tractoritis, for which, in his case, a cure is neither sought nor likely.

In the years that followed, Martin drove every type of tractor he could find. To him, the barns around his home were like giant toy cupboards. Behind their doors lay chugging, nobbly-eyed delights. "My mother was a bit apprehensive, but my father didn't object and I was completely happy out there in the fields."

"I learnt the art of not stalling the engine. There were few self-starters in those days and I was too small to restart it by hand and the walk back to the farm could be miles."

Fifty years later, Martin can relive those bucolic days. While many men of his age might dabble in a little nostalgic collecting to remind themselves of childhood — perhaps of those delectable Dinky or tinplate toys — he collects tractors. Real ones, of course. "I want to collect all the tractors I drove between the age of eight and 21. I have a couple of duplicates, but I still need another four."

The 13, all in working order, are lined up in an Essex barn, their years of serious ploughing and pulling and mud-plugging behind them. Now they are cherished, even loved. For, like classic cars, there are classic tractors, and a collector may wax as lyrical about a Minneapolis Moline or a grey "Fergie" as a car buff about a Ferrari or Aston Martin.

"This is a pretty modest collection. I know a farmer who has 45," says Martin as he prepares to start the 82-hp engine of an American John Deere by turning its giant, side-mounted flywheel. The engine has only two massive cylinders and emits sounds of mechanical flatulence as it strains into life. Like many of his tractors, it is started on petrol and switched to paraffin.

Martin began collecting when he decided he would like a Fordson N, identical to the one he had first driven as a boy. Working for Ford Tractor Operations and later becoming UK Sales Manager of Ford New Holland, he had a network of contacts and was tipped off about a Fordson in Denbigh, North Wales.

It turned out to be a sort of friend of the family. Well past its final plough-by date, it was supported on blocks, its engine seized. But owner John Emyl Williams didn't really want to sell. "I sat with his family, drinking tea, eating scones and talking of this tractor as if it were a person. In the end, we agreed on a price of £50."

That was the beginning. Then Martin thought he would like an example of the second tractor he had driven... and the third... and the fourth... Some were bought privately, some at auction. "The most I've paid is £4,000, but a rare type, such as a Saunderson, might make £20,000. There was a time when classic cars were always being found in barns, but the search is also on for old tractors in good condition. I discovered a 1947 Fordson E27N like that — I just saw the exhaust pipe sticking up in the gloom of a barn."

Fordsons dominated the scene in those days. In Second World War Britain, the models made in Dagenham accounted for 90 per cent of all tractors on the land. There are two models that he drove in those

early days that he especially wants to find: a John Deere AR, a 2-cylinder, petrol/paraffin model with a hand clutch imported from the United States in the mid 1930s, and an Allis Chalmers U, a 4-cylinder, petrol/paraffin model dating from the 1940s. It was an American-designed machine but only small numbers were used in Britain.

He has an Allis Chalmers B, a small tractor commonly used for rowcrop cultivation, but the U was a heavy plough tractor which could also be used for driving a threshing machine via its belt pulley.

There is an enormous choice of tractor types to collect. Many have truly evocative names, such as Platypus Bogmaster, Big Bull, Lanz Bulldog and Yeoman of England: some sound plain and simple like the Nutfield Universal, while others have an elegant image: Imperial, Hornsby-Ackroyd, Citroën-Kegresse, and the tongue-twisting combination, Hoffer-Schran-Clayton-Shuntleworth.

A few years ago, some shrewd dealing could see a handsome profit turned on a classic tractor. Now, says Martin, that's unlikely, although he believes the market is coming back. "But how nice to put your money into a handsome tractor which is also great fun to use — I drive mine in half a dozen shows a year — instead of tucking it away in a building society with a low interest rate. You shouldn't lose money on a tractor. They are basically simple pieces of machinery and spare parts are generally obtainable and not expensive."

Some have hidden talents, too. "As a child, I went out to the fields one day on a Case LA — the second tractor I drove — and the farmer I was working for brought along some fresh eggs. I thought we were going to eat them raw, but at lunchtime he closed the tractor's radiator blind, drove up and down the field to get the water boiling, stopped, produced a little wire basket, removed the radiator cap, and popped them inside. We had boiled eggs for lunch."

It was one of the nicer surprises of Martin Brown's young life.



"I want to collect all the tractors I drove between the age of eight and 21. I have a couple of duplicates, but I still need another four"

- THE world's original tractor is generally accepted to have been made by the Charter Gas Engine Company of Illinois in 1889. It had a single-cylinder petrol engine and metal wheels.
- THE first mass-produced tractor was the 1917 Fordson F.
- LARGE rear wheels give tractors maximum grip on rough and muddy ground while the small front wheels provide a tight turning circle and lighter steering.
- BRITAIN's first commercially successful tractor was the Hornsby-Ackroyd built in Grantham, Lincolnshire.
- SALES of tractors in the UK last year totalled 20,079. The most successful manufacturers include Massey Ferguson, New Holland Ford/Fiat, John Deere and Case.
- A HARD-used tractor will typically clock up 1,500 hours a year and spend three years with its first owner.

TRACTOR FACTS

tractor was the Hornsby-Ackroyd built in Grantham, Lincolnshire.

- UNTIL the 1950s tractors were mainly petrol and paraffin powered. Diesel engines are almost universal today for added pulling power with economy.
- RADAR is used on some modern tractors to measure the amount of land covered, work output and to detect wheel slip.
- SOME tractor gearboxes have up to 50 gears, 20 of them in reverse.
- ONE OF the most powerful tractors on the UK market is the Versatile New Holland 9680, which costs £107,000.

Some farmers really can tell people: 'My other tractor's a Lamborghini'

Helen Mound explains how one of the world's most glamorous cars began its life in a pile of junk metal

Sumptuous curves and the huge burbling engine single out the machine as one of the most exotic of carhakers. Except this machine has truck-size wheels, one seal and usually pulls a plough — it is a Lamborghini tractor.

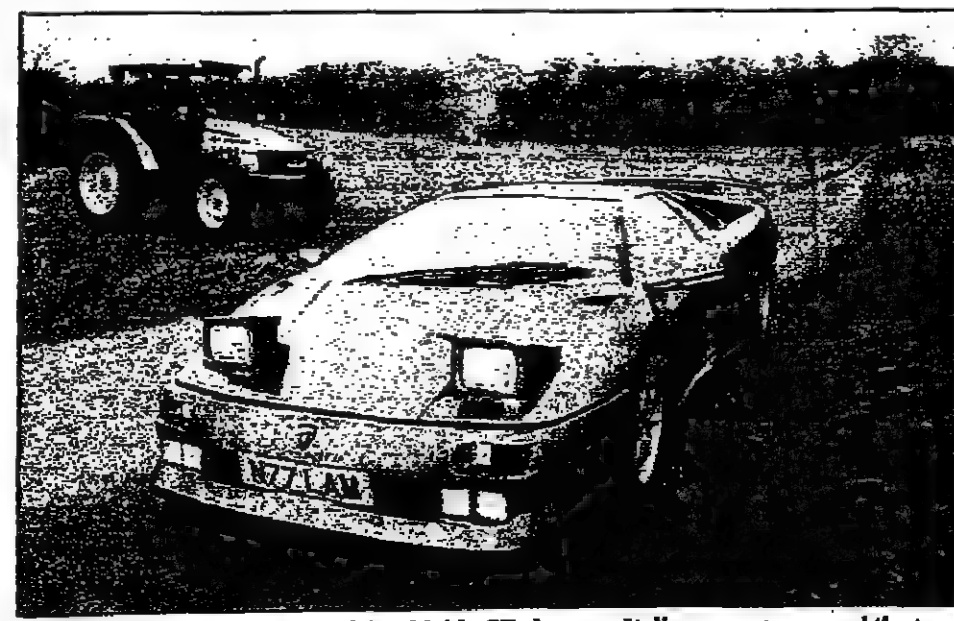
The company's charging bull badge is famous for being attached to the sloping bonnets of some of the world's quickest cars, monsters that batter the tarmac at speeds up to 200mph.

But the Lamborghini dynasty started in the humble surroundings of Italian fields, turning the sod for generations of farmers. Myth has it that Ferruccio Lamborghini only started building sports cars after being snubbed by the man also busy building an Italian engineering dynasty, Enzo Ferrari. Lamborghini bought a Ferrari that was less than reliable, so the legend goes, and turned up at the Maranello factory, demanding to see Enzo himself. Ferrari refused, leaving Lamborghini, then a successful industrialist, fuming and vowing to take revenge by making even greater cars.

tion of junk for his parents' farm. That was just after the Second World War when demand for workhorse vehicles was at its height.

Even on honeymoon, his eyes were on the scrapped vehicles he could use to make more tractors. Instead of moonlight and romance with his new wife, he watched British forces in Italy disposing of a fleet of light armoured cars. Calling an abrupt end to the honeymoon, he took some of the armoured cars (and his bride) home and set about converting them into small tractors.

They might have been slightly "Heath Robinson" but were so tough that Lamborghini regularly challenged other mechanics to tug-of-war with their tractors to test which was the most powerful. Lamborghini's *carroccio* was rarely beaten, reinforcing a growing reputation for strength. In 1952, he expanded to make diesel-engined tractors, with two, three or four cylinders, and two years later produced the first air-cooled, direct-injection diesel tractor.



The 1050 Premium tractor and the Diablo SE share an Italian ancestor — and the tractors outsell the cars in Britain

make cars that could challenge those from his great rival, Ferrari. At 46, Lamborghini started attaching his now famous badge to cars as well as tractors. He owned a string of exotic cars — a Maserati, Jaguar, Aston Martin, Chevrolet Corvette and several Ferraris — but he declared: "My machines will be faster, more beautiful and more expensive than those from Maranello."

He had become sceptical about the future of tractors — eventually selling the business to the Samé Group in 1972 — and concentrated on his supercars, with exotics like the Miura and Countach turning

heads the world over, even if his company could never quite rival the sales achieved by Ferrari. While the latter found shelter under the wing of Fiat, Lamborghini cars have had many owners, including Chrysler and now Megatech, an Indonesian company.

The Samé Group's tractors continue to carry the Lamborghini name and badge and hold as much prestige value as the cars. Unexpectedly, perhaps, more Lamborghini tractors — around 200 a year — are sold in the UK annually than the cars. The price tag is certainly lower, with the tractors retailing at £35,000-£75,000, yet the seri-

cultural giants are every bit as luxurious as their car counterparts: even mid-range models get a stereo, air-conditioning, cruise control, air suspension seat and a massive engine controlled by 60 gears.

To reunite the two disparate branches of the family, I drove a Lamborghini Diablo SE to North Walsham Tractors in Norfolk, one of the few Lamborghini tractor dealers in the UK. Peering out of the Diablo's near ground-level side windows, the tractor towered over me. I clambered out over the car's door sill and started confronting the differ-



The 1050 Premium tractor and the Diablo SE share an Italian ancestor — and the tractors outsell the cars in Britain

COMPARISONS

Lamborghini Diablo SE
Price: £175,000;
Engine: V12 5700cc,
520 bhp.
Performance: Top
speed, 206mph; 0-
62mph in 4 seconds.
Economy: 18mpg at
best.

Lamborghini 1050
Premium
Price: £40,000
(approx).
Engine: 4-cylinder
4000cc turbo, 103bhp.
Performance: Top
speed, 25mph.
Economy: Measured
in hours, not miles.

The dashboard is a complicated place too, more helicopter cockpit than the farmer's little helper. Unlike the first basic models, that offered little more than the pulling power of a traditional ox, the modern versions boast "fly-by-wire" controls, and virtually everything, including gears, acceleration and towing equipment, can be operated from the armrest.

While the tractor business has its own established network of sales outlets, Lamborghini cars have been going through a period of change... and change for the better. Control of imports was taken over by Porsche Cars Great Britain a year ago, with hopes high of a revival in flagging fortunes.

The play worked, and the company has sold 19 Diablos at between £148,000 and £175,000. There are orders for eight more from the Diablo range — SE, VT or new Roadster, which goes on sale this spring — and 13 deposits have been placed for the LP140, one of Lamborghini's new cars planned for launch in the next two years, even though potential customers have no idea of styling, price or the car's name.

The success would put a smile on the face of the man who just wanted to make cars faster and better than Ferrari... but that remarkable tractor would probably also tickle the fancy of the man who built his first from scrap metal.

BMW

525iE Sport 1992 525iE Striding Silver/black leather CD multi-speaker 60,000 miles, immaculate condition, 513,995. 0131 250232.

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ASTON MARTIN

DB6 VOLANTE 1967. Dark Blue with Tan trim. 66,000 miles. Comprehensive supporting history. Original manual complete with Power Steering. £59,950. Consider P/X. 01825 830966. 0831 440751 T.

ASTON MARTIN AUTHORISED

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AUDI

LIMITED EDITION Audi RS2 Estate, Registered May 1995, Dark Metallic Grey, Full Black Leather Interior, Directors Car, £46,000 c.m. Daytime Mon-Fri 01252 516242.

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FERRARI

308 GTB 1979, 1981, 1983, 1985, 1987, 1989, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021, 2023, 2025, 2027, 2029, 2031, 2033, 2035, 2037, 2039, 2041, 2043, 2045, 2047, 2049, 2051, 2053, 2055, 2057, 2059, 2061, 2063, 2065, 2067, 2069, 2071, 2073, 2075, 2077, 2079, 2081, 2083, 2085, 2087, 2089, 2091, 2093, 2095, 2097, 2099, 2101, 2103, 2105, 2107, 2109, 2111, 2113, 2115, 2117, 2119, 2121, 2123, 2125, 2127, 2129, 2131, 2133, 2135, 2137, 2139, 2141, 2143, 2145, 2147, 2149, 2151, 2153, 2155, 2157, 2159, 2161, 2163, 2165, 2167, 2169, 2171, 2173, 2175, 2177, 2179, 2181, 2183, 2185, 2187, 2189, 2191, 2193, 2195, 2197, 2199, 2201, 2203, 2205, 2207, 2209, 2211, 2213, 2215, 2217, 2219, 2221, 2223, 2225, 2227, 2229, 2231, 2233, 2235, 2237, 2239, 2241, 2243, 2245, 2247, 2249, 2251, 2253, 2255, 2257, 2259, 2261, 2263, 2265, 2267, 2269, 2271, 2273, 2275, 2277, 2279, 2281, 2283, 2285, 2287, 2289, 2291, 2293, 2295, 2297, 2299, 2301, 2303, 2305, 2307, 2309, 2311, 2313, 2315, 2317, 2319, 2321, 2323, 2325, 2327, 2329, 2331, 2333, 2335, 2337, 2339, 2341, 2343, 2345, 2347, 2349, 2351, 2353, 2355, 2357, 2359, 2361, 2363, 2365, 2367, 2369, 2371, 2373, 2375, 2377, 2379, 2381, 2383, 2385, 2387, 2389, 2391, 2393, 2395, 2397, 2399, 2401, 2403, 2405, 2407, 2409, 2411, 2413, 2415, 2417, 2419, 2421, 2423, 2425, 2427, 2429, 2431, 2433, 2435, 2437, 2439, 2441, 2443, 2445, 2447, 2449, 2451, 2453, 2455, 2457, 2459, 2461, 2463, 2465, 2467, 2469, 2471, 2473, 24

50 M-REGISTERED CARS UNDER £7,000



Although it could be argued a dirty windscreen is more dangerous than a blown bulb,

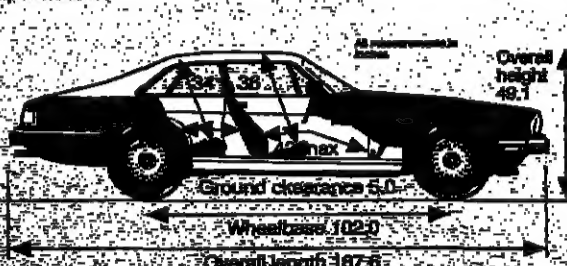
Finding a blown bulb during a journey can be an irksome handicap. Not only does it risk becoming the target of a blue flashing light, it may also mean a lengthy detour to find a replacement.

The AA's diagnosis is that it

was probably either an earthing problem or a short circuit, which could have been caused by a loose, dirty or corroded connection. But the RAC has an alternative suggestion. It could just as well have been a wrong replacement bulb in one of the lights, surmises spokesman Peter Brill.

"I had a very similar problem on my own car, and it turned out to be an incorrect bulb which was causing the aberration. When you have to change a bulb, it is vital to check that the type, size and strength is exactly the same as the one being replaced."

JAGUAR XJS
Launched in 1975 in the wake of an oil crisis, owners were not good for the thirsty XJS which had to shed the shoes of the E-type that had died the year before. Critics said it had been designed by "a team of three and they weren't talking to each other." Two decades later the XJS is still going strong, but will be superseded when the 3000 goes on sale this year. For two decades it has upheld Jaguar's reputation for impeccable glamour cars. Range radically revamped in 1991.



PRICES:
For earlier cars
expect to pay
\$3,000 for a 1983
5-year 3.6-litre
coupe around \$2,250 for a
1980 V12 3.3-litre coupe and
\$2,500 for a 1985 V12
5.3-litre cabriolet. Pay
around \$8,500 for a 1988
3.6-litre car, pay \$15,000 for a
1990 V12 5.3-litre convertible
and \$20,000 for a 1993

OVERALL: The XJS must come with full service history of heartbreak and financial ruin as to be avoided. Steer clear of DIY restoration jobs. Choice of 3.6-liter and 4-liter engines plus the V12 in 3.3 and 5.9 liter give performance up to 160mph. Supposedly 2 + 2 but back seats are for maps or tiny children only. Classy cruiser and a classic. Look no, lower.

DRIVERS in the North East are set to buck the expected "feel-bad" factor this year and flock to dealership showrooms, a new study claims. As many as 40 per cent of motorists in the region expect to replace their cars this year, compared with national figures showing that only one driver in four plans to change cars in 1996, the lowest rate overall for two years, writes *Vaughan Freeman*.

well as anxiety over job security and employment prospects, mean that the rate of car replacements this year will be down on 1995, when a third of motorists replaced their cars, and also on 1994, when 28 per cent did so.

A survey of 655 motorists nationwide found that fears about job security were putting two out of three off the idea of buying a replacement new or used car, and that nationally seven out of 10 drivers were simply unable to afford a change in 1996.

[illegible]

Used Mercedes. One careful manufacturer.

[illegible]

STEERING COLUMN

ise of "big car" comfort and offering excellent visibility. The instruments were not only good-looking but clearer to read, especially at night, than any other car I have recently driven. But I wonder whether the researchers asked anyone about the radio? The on/off switch was a real fingernail-breaker and the volume and wavelength were all controlled by the same square button, up and down for volume and side to side for wavelength. The possibilities for error were so great, I listened to tapes.

While Europeans demanded low noise levels and interior refinement, Japanese customers were more concerned about economy and Americans were very anxious to reduce tyre wear. The Japanese also expressed a preference for more interior comfort, especially better shaped seats.

This is one area where the results of that research become obvious: the driving position of the four-door model I tested was real living room relaxed, living up to its prom-

The exterior is longer than previous versions and the styling, although hardly exciting, has an elegance that was lacking in the past.

Where this car really scored, however, was in quiet economy. The VTEC engine is electronically controlled to keep consumption to a minimum when driven gently and to provide more responsive performance for the driver in a hurry. This, allied to the excellent reputation Honda has for quality, wherever its cars are built, means the Civic name is likely to be with us for a long time yet.

Carey, crimped to the rich and famous, has worked with the models' favourite photographers such as Bailey, Snowdon and Lichfield. He has styled the hair of Dustin Hoffman, Al Pacino, William Hurt, Felicity Kendal, Sarah Miles, Joanna Lumley and Tom Jones. He twice styled the hair of the Duchess of York.

A regular on television and radio Carey, 37, who has a team of 23 at his salon, started off aged 16 in a local barber's shop, Giacomo Pierro, in Oldham. He charged £1.10 for a haircut; men now pay £39 for a cut and blow dry and women £59.

How did you first learn to drive?

How did you first learn to drive?

On the driveway in my father's house. I used to spend hours going backwards and forwards until I plucked up enough courage to go on the road. In the process I reversed into a sewage pipe. I was just 17. It quickly put an end to my driving lessons. It was sometime before I tried again. I failed the first time — I couldn't remember where I'd parked my car.

What was your first car?

A Fiat 500, which I bought from a friend for £10. It was my pride and joy. It had no seat or floor on the passenger side. With the inclusion of some planks of wood, and an old school chair, my car was complete. Almost. Once it started I had to fuse some wires in the engine to ensure it would not stop. It kept me mobile for six months until it finally died. My father had been desperate to tow it away.

What car do you drive now, and why?

A Range Rover Vogue SE — my latest pride and joy. It is ideal for a family of three. I drive to Mayfair, from my home in Swiss Cottage, which can take anything from five minutes to 45. Cars never argue with me. Obstacles such as traffic lights, zebra crossings, pedestrians and crazy drivers I can deal with. But I have yet to master the traffic wardens.

Do you like driving?

It's one of my favourite pastimes. It is the only place where you do not have to talk to anyone.

A black and white photograph of a man sitting in the driver's seat of a classic convertible car. The car is parked in front of a building with a sign that reads "ALAN WELLS". The man is looking towards the camera. The car has a large, prominent grille and a classic design. The background shows a building with a sign that reads "ALAN WELLS" and some other text that is partially obscured.

Carey and his Range Rover Vogue SE: "Cars never argue with me, but I've yet to master the traffic wardens."

and was running late. I shaved off one of my sideburns without realising it.

Have you ever had points on your licence?

— — — — —

Six, I'm afraid. I once broke down in the fast lane on the M6. The police had to tow me off on to the hard shoulder. I should have rung the AA. I did not realise that my tax and insurance had run out two days earlier. But they did.

What do you listen to in the car?

Capital Radio and Kiss FM. Sometimes Michael Jackson and Motown. When I am stressed or tired, I will play Pavarotti or Carreras.

If you were Secretary of State for Transport, what is the first thing you would do?

Abolish the privatised clamping and towing companies. Why should we pay more money when we already have road tax?

What is your favourite car advertisement?

The Renault Clio. Nicole is cute, Pap is trendy, and Mama is the boss.

What is your most hated car?

The one which indicates after it has turned; the one car which uses two lanes instead of one; worst of all, the car in my space outside *my* house.

What is your dream car?

**An old Bentley or a new Bentley Azure.
It has everything: style sophistication
and elegance.**

What is your worst habit in the car?

Smiling and waving at other drivers when they are annoyed with me.

What infuriates you most about other drivers?

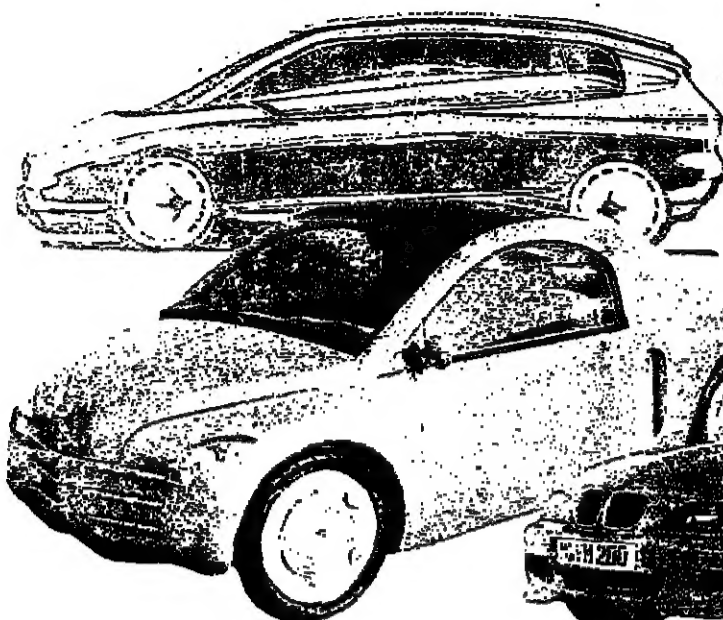
When they chat away and pose on their mobile phones oblivious to the traffic jam they are creating. If only they knew how naff they looked. They should buy a hands free telephone.

What is the most unusual thing you have done in your car?

Every day is an adventure, but it has to be the time I had a wet shave on the M6 in the passenger seat of a BMW. I was on my way to the wedding of a client, Sally Faber, the television presenter.

Alan Copps, Editor of *Car 96*, looks at some of the new models which will be unveiled in Geneva next week

Coming to a dealer near you



Vauxhall's late but impressive entry in the people carrier stakes is one of a host of models to make its debut next week at the Geneva Motor Show, traditionally the most important international launching pad for new cars.

The Sintra offers seating for up to eight people and space for their luggage on a platform just eight inches longer than the Vectra. It also promises car-like ride and handling and a wide range of safety features. But its biggest impact in what is already considered an overcrowded market is likely to rest with its record on economy. The use of lightweight materials such as aluminium and magnesium for many components, together with Vauxhall's multi-valve ECOTEC engines, which already make the Vectra the most economical car in its class, makes the US-built Sintra

a serious challenge to the Renault Espace, Ford Galaxy and Peugeot/Citroën/Fiat family of MPVs. An overall fuel consumption figure of 33.6 mpg is claimed for the 2.2-litre engine version, while the top-of-the-range 3-litre V6 promises a maximum speed of 126mph.

On the sporting side, Jaguar's XK8 faces tough competition for the limelight from BMW's new M Roadster and the Aston Martin V8 Coupé. The BMW is the big punchy version of the Z3 which has attracted so much hype from James Bond's patronage in *Goldeneye*. The M produces 300bhp from its 3.2-litre straight six and promises to match the Jaguar's acceleration with a 0-62mph figure of "under six seconds". Top speed is electronically limited to 155mph. Production dates and prices have yet to be announced.

Clockwise from top right the Sintra, Vauxhall's American-built fuel-saving people carrier; the Bentley Continental T; BMW's M Roadster, extra power added to James Bond's *Goldeneye* car; the Renault Fifte, descendant of the 4CV; and the first original model from Holland's Nedcar factory

Similar performance is promised for the Aston Martin V8 Coupé which uses a 350bhp 5.3-litre engine normally linked to a four-speed electronically controlled automatic transmission, although manual five- and six-speed versions will be available. Production has already started at the company's Newport Pagnell factory, where it takes craftsmen 15 weeks to hand-build each car. The price tag of £139,500 promises each one will be tailor-made for the customer.

Also in the ultra-luxury, tailor-made class are three new models from Rolls-Royce and Bentley, including the new top-of-the-range

Rolls-Royce Park Ward, said to offer unlimited scope for personalisation. Each customer will have the opportunity to design an individual interior and specify options for chauffeur-driven luxury, business use or family touring. These features include separate air conditioning controls for front and rear seats, remote control of in-car entertainment (which can include television/video) and illuminated picnic tables.

The two new Bentleys are both launched with heavy emphasis on the marque's sporting heritage. The Continental T is a more powerful version of the successful R

coupé with a reworked interior and improved brakes. The Turbo R Sport is specifically aimed at the European market with a satellite navigation system integrated into the interior design, which also includes starting use of carbon fibre where traditional Bentleys sported walnut.

Among the concept cars, Renault's retro-styled Fifte is likely to attract a lot of attention with its shape based on the 4CV of 1946 which became the first French car to have a million-plus production run. The two-seat coupé is built on the same chassis as the windscreen-less Renault Sport Spider which

will be cutting a dash on circuits around Europe this summer in a special racing series. Its four-cylinder 1149cc engine is a unit destined for Renault's small production cars including the Clio.

There is also a concept from Nedcar, the Dutch-based company which makes cars for Volvo and Mitsubishi, the first vehicle made by the firm under its own name. The Access project (it stands for Aluminium-based Concept of a CO₂ Emissions Saving Sub-compact car) is designed to display the company's advanced engineering capabilities in a small, economical family transport.



EUROPE STARTS TO CUT THE JAPANESE LEAD

AFTER years of Japanese domination of just about every customer satisfaction survey, the Europeans are finally punching back.

A survey of 20,000 buyers this week showed a surge of approval for European-made cars for their style, driveability — and, remarkably, their reliability. European manufacturers wiped out their Japanese opposition in the league tables for executive and luxury cars, with Mercedes-Benz dominating. But the biggest surprises were for minis and compacts, where Japanese reliability has been legendary.

Fiat's Punto was best supermini, with the Renault Clio not far behind. The Nissan Micra

was third — but, never fear, that model is made in Britain at Washington, Tyne and Wear. The Toyota Corolla and Mazda 323 were still highest scoring compacts, although Rover 400 showed strongly. But the Renault Laguna and Audi 80/90 took honours among medium models.

So what happened? Professor Dan Jones, who led the research, says: "The European industry has responded to the shock of Japanese success with a remarkably strong showing. The Europeans have simply raised their game and the results are starting to show through in surveys like this."

TOP CARS

Superminis: Fiat Punto, Renault Clio, Nissan Micra.

Compacts: Mazda 323, Toyota Corolla, Rover 400.

Medium: Renault Laguna, Audi 80/90, Toyota Carina.

Executive: Mercedes E-class and C-class, BMW 5-series.

Luxury: Mercedes S-class, Rolls-Royce, Jaguar/Daimler.

4x4: Mitsubishi Shogun, Range Rover, Land Rover.

DR DASHBOARD

One bad tyre should not be blown up too much

Q Good heavens, Dr Dashboard. That case this week in which a Dunlop tyre burst was horrifying. My car has Dunlops. What on earth should I do?

A For a start, don't panic. The chances of you having the same Dunlop SP4 radial as in that accident are pretty remote. That SP4 was phased out in 1985 and millions have since covered billions of miles without problems.

Q But the tyre ripped and caused the accident, simple as that. Surely that shouldn't happen?

A True. The judge decided there was a manufacturing fault, but there was also a moral in the story because the court heard that this tyre was in less than perfect condition: worn, under-inflated and it had been punctured and badly repaired, according to Dunlop's lawyers.

Q Are you trying to tell me that tyres are so vulnerable they can cause accidents as bad as that?

A Actually, tyre failure of that magnitude is quite rare, according to the AA, accounting for only 0.3 per cent of crashes. What is not known is how much rotten tyres contribute to accidents. Cars with worn tyres are more likely to veer out of control, particularly in the wet or on tricky surfaces, while braking distances can be lengthened enormously.

Q But I can't be going backwards and forwards to Kwik-Fit worrying about my tyres. Is there any way to ensure my tyres are OK without undue fuss?

A Modern tyres are pretty robust, but, like water, oil and the petrol tank, they need regular checking. SP Tyres UK, which makes Dunlops, says check the pressures and ensure that there is the minimum tread of 1.6 millimetres, look for bulges in the sidewalls or cuts or nicks, and make sure you have a good spare.

Q SP should talk if they own the Dunlop name! They have been in court over this whole issue.

A Actually, they have not. This case dates back to the days when Dunlop, the tyre-maker started by John Boyd Dunlop at the birth of the motor industry, was struggling. In 1985, the company was split up, with Sumitomo of Japan buying the Dunlop brand name and factory in Birmingham to form SP Tyres UK. The BTR conglomerate picked up Dunlop Ltd., which owned some other interests. But the litigation related to tyres made originally by Dunlop Ltd — and BTR was in the firing line from then on. Complicated, but that's modern multi-national business for you.



THE NEW MAZDA 323

Right
0345 48 48 22

Wrong
0345 48 48 23

(mazda) > (the rest)

مَكْزَا مِنَ الْأَصْلِ